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There was something feminine in Sainte-Beuve's genius, which made him singularly successful in penetrating into the souls of women, — a combination of instinct and insight which few women, perhaps, have shown in the tolerant interpretation of each other's souls. . . . He called her "the most courageous, tender, and compassionate of feminine souls, she whom I do not hesitate to call the Mater Dolorosa of poetry." Miss Preston, the translator of the "Memoirs," is already well known for her version of "Portraits de Femmes;" and this second attempt to introduce Sainte-Beuve to a wide circle of American readers promises to be even more popular than the first.

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Sainte-Beuve speaks of Madame Valmore as the most courageous, tender, and compassionate of female souls, — whom he does not hesitate to call the Mater Dolorosa of poetry. Early left an orphan by the death of her mother, she sought a livelihood as an actress. But at twenty, she says, her private griefs compelled her to give up singing, "for the sound of my own voice made me weep." So music turned to poetry within her. Possessed of an exquisite tenderness of spirit, her heart was fitted for the extremes of delight and sadness. As Michelet remarked, she alone among them had the "gift of tears." Deeply interesting as her life is, there was, of course, something morbid about it, — something which this sketchy Memoir does not explain. Such lives cannot be understood without first understanding intimately the profound unrest and turbulence of French society in those revolutionary times during which her lot was cast. There are just enough points of resemblance between her career and that of the Cary sisters to give interest and instructiveness to the contrasts between them. The translator, Miss Preston has again shown the fine skill which she has for such work.

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One volume, uniform with "Madame Récamier's Memoirs." Price $1.50.

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This volume comes to supplement the "Memoirs and Correspondence of Madame Récamier," which, although a lively and exceedingly entertaining sketch of the society of the Abbaye-aux-Bois, occasioned very general dissatisfaction among both its French and American readers; for, being made up of letters which were written to her, and not of those which she had herself penned, it did not leave upon the mind any clear, definite impression of the real character of Madame Récamier, into whose secret history all the world was curious to inquire. The failure of that copious work in its main purpose is the ostensible cause of the existence of this after volume, in which are introduced over forty of the private notes and letters of Madame Récamier; these are as graceful, genial, and chatty as any of the gossip, legitimized under the name of memoirs, recollections, correspondence, or what not, which we have met with, but they hardly fill the gap which was left in the previous volumes.

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We think this book in many respects much more valuable than the last. However charming the other was, we cannot resist the feeling that it must have been injurious to woman of society with us, in giving them a longing after unreal pleasures . . . We believe in the friendships of men and women. But when the blandishments and artificialities of fashionable society come in, there is danger that the dignity of the sentiment will be lost in the passion of love. This second volume shows more of this true kind of friendship. Madame Récamier was in misfortune; she had lost her health; she showed patience, courage, disinterestedness for her friends. We are taken captive like all the rest of the world. Her devotion to her niece was touching; her power of loving beautiful. Her friends are noble men like Camille Jordan and Mathieu de Montmorency, the one warning her against coquetry, the other recommending to her the joys of religion. Chateaubriand does not inspire our respect, and she betrays again her early love of conquest in keeping the young and passionate Ampère so long at her side. We must not, however, compare Madame Récamier with our highest American or English ideal of what a woman in distinguished social position should be, but with the voluptuous and ambitious women of her day and race, and we shall see her standing forth a bright and charming and beloved vision, far transcending them all.

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MEMOIRS

AND

CORRESPONDENCE

OF

MADAME RÉCAMIER.

SLATED FROM THE FRENCH AND EDITED

BY

ISAPHENE M. LUYSTER.

NINTH EDITION.

BOSTON:
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INTRODUCTION.

THE "SOUVENIRS ET CORRESPONDANCE TIRÉS DES PAPIERS DE MME. RÉCAMIER," published in Paris in 1859, and now for the first time translated, is by Mme. Lenormant, the niece of M. Récamier, and the adopted daughter of his wife. To this lady, Mme. Récamier bequeathed her papers, with the understanding that she was to use them in the preparation of a biography.

Mme. Lenormant had a difficult, as well as delicate, task assigned her, — one requiring taste and skill, tact and judgment. The materials at her command were rich and valuable, but fragmentary and disconnected. To give them unity and completeness, grace and finish, would have been perplexing, even to a practised writer; and the Memoirs, if we do not mistake, was Mme. Lenormant's first essay in authorship. Consequently it is not surprising that the book should bear marks of crudity and inexperience. It is involved and diffuse in style, and faulty in method. Events are not always given in their natural and proper order; repetitions are frequent; trivial details usurp the place of necessary facts; and much matter is introduced which is not only tiresome, but wholly irrelevant.

In order, therefore, to give the work, in its English dress, a more compact and readable form, an effort has been

made to tone down its prominent defects, so far as that could be done without destroying its essential and distinctive character. No changes have been made in the text which could not be effected simply by condensation, omission, and transposition. The individuality of the author has been scrupulously preserved; all important statements are translated literally; and, in every case, care has been taken to convey the precise meaning. Nothing has been omitted that could either throw light upon Mme. Récamier's character and career, or that was of general interest in the way of gossip and anecdote. Of the four hundred and fifty-three letters in the original, three hundred and eighty-four are reproduced in the translation; including the whole of Chateaubriand's, in their regular order, and all others of special interest and importance.

This correspondence has one singular feature, in which it differs from that usually found in biographies. It is composed almost entirely of letters addressed to Mme. Récamier, instead of those written by herself. Only seven of her own are given, and these not addressed to any of the correspondents whose letters form so large a portion of the Memoirs.

Mme. Lenormant does not account anywhere in the work for this unfortunate deficiency; but in "Coppet et Weimar," published subsequently, she thus casually alludes to it: "Mme. Récamier's letters are rare, and this very rarity excites curiosity. Still she corresponded regularly with Matthieu de Montmorency, Mme. de Staël, and M. de Chateaubriand. It would be a sad fatality, indeed, if none of her letters have been preserved. I should be sorry to believe this: let us hope, on the contrary, that we shall some day be able to judge for ourselves whether her style

can aid us in comprehending her ascendancy over her contemporaries."

Though this hope may yet be realized with regard to Mme. Récamier's letters to occasional correspondents, and possibly to Mme. de Staël, we are inclined to think, judging from internal evidence, that it will prove fallacious as far as the bulk of her confidential correspondence is concerned. After the death of Matthieu de Montmorency, his widow gave her letters from him to Mme. Récamier. If Mme. de Montmorency could bestow upon her husband's friend such a mark of confidence, it is highly probable that she also returned to Mme. Récamier what would be of much more importance to her, — her own correspondence with M. de Montmorency. It is even more reasonable to conclude, that she ultimately obtained possession of that with Chateaubriand and Ballanche, since she was with them both at the time of their death, and was their nearest and best friend; nor is it difficult, if this supposition be correct, to conjecture the fate of these letters. They probably formed part of the packet, containing an unfinished record of her personal reminiscences, which Mme. Récamier directed to be burnt at her death; for the feeling that prompted her to destroy the record would be still stronger in the case of the letters.

It is clear that Mme. Récamier was anxious to conceal her inner and personal life from the scrutiny of the world. Her autobiography was only undertaken at the repeated solicitations of her friends, who tried, almost in vain, to inspire her with confidence in her own powers. "Experience," says Mme. Lenormant, in the Preface to the French edition of her book, "partially overcame this self-distrust; but the feebleness of Mme. Récamier's sight, followed, in the last part of her life, by almost total blind-

ness, prevented her continuing the work she had begun. She had never been in the habit of dictating; and she could not read what she had written, on account of the extreme fineness of her handwriting. Hence, we do not suppose that she had made much progress." Of the style and form of this unfinished manuscript, we are fortunately able to form some idea, as Mme. Lenormant found, among other papers, a few portions of it, which are inserted in the Memoirs. The style is easy and graceful, and the anecdotes and incidents related are both pertinent and interesting. It is much to be regretted, therefore, that Mme. Récamier did not carry out her original design. But, great as this loss is, it is not so irreparable as that of her correspondence; since it is plain, from the few specimens we have, that she was expansive and confidential when writing to those she loved. That her letters were prized by her friends is also evident: Mme. de Staël especially is lavish in her encomiums.

"What a charm there is in your style!" she exclaims. "If I wanted to write a novel, wherein to portray a celestial being, it would be your expressions I should use, without changing a single line." Again she writes: "Prince Augustus has written me a letter full of you. He speaks enthusiastically of your letters, your mind, your character."[1] The Duke de Laval also alludes to the grace and charm of Mme. Récamier's letters, while Ballanche and Chateaubriand speak of them as their greatest source of pleasure and consolation.

But, aside from their epistolary excellences, such letters would have been invaluable aids in comprehending aright a career which, from its singularity, has given rise to so

[1] "Coppet et Weimar, Mme. de Staël et La Grande Duchesse Louise. Paris, 1862.

many contradictory impressions; especially as the Memoirs do not, in other respects, make up for their absence. On the contrary, Mme. Lenormant's half-and-half statements and vague allusions continually provoke curiosity, without gratifying it.[1] We want to know more than she tells us of the heart-history of a woman who so captivated the world; to see her sometimes in the silence of solitude, alone with her own heart; to gain an insight into the inner, that we may more perfectly comprehend the outward life that so perplexes and confounds. Instead of this, we have drawing-room interviews with the object of our interest; we see her chiefly as she appears in society. We hear of her conquests, her social triumphs; we listen to panegyrics; but are seldom admitted behind the scenes to judge for ourselves what is gold or what is tinsel. Nor is it possible to resist the conviction, that Mme. Lenormant did not hesitate to suppress any circumstances likely to cast a shadow over the memory of one to whom she was bound by such tender ties of affection and gratitude. It is true that, in a few instances, she relates facts not wholly to the credit of Mme. Récamier; but it is also evident, that she herself is totally unconscious of their nature and bearing. It was owing to these indiscretions that the Memoirs were a disappointment to some of Mme. Récamier's personal friends, and one of them,[2] an Englishwoman, undertook to remove the misconceptions it might convey. Mme. Mohl corrects a few slight inaccuracies; and endeavors, though not with entire success, to justify Mme. Récamier's conduct toward Prince Augustus of

[1] Portions of this Introduction have already appeared in an article in the "Atlantic Monthly," October, 1864.

[2] "Mme. Récamier; with a Sketch of the History of Society in France. By Mme. M * * *." London, 1862.

Prussia. Her version of the principal facts of Mme. Récamier's life is substantially the same as that given by Mme. Lenormant; though, as an explanation of the singular relations subsisting between M. and Mme. Récamier, she states that it was generally believed by their contemporaries, that the latter was M. Récamier's own daughter, whom the unsettled state of the times had induced him to marry: and she adds, that "Mme. Lenormant rather confirms than contradicts this statement." In this she is wholly mistaken. Mme. Lenormant, though she does not allude to the report, still tacitly contradicts it; while the account she gives of M. Récamier's course, in regard to the proposed divorce between himself and his wife, is of itself a refutation of the story.

Mme. Mohl's reminiscences are pleasant from their personal character, though inferior, in point of insight, to the eminently suggestive sketch, by Sainte Beuve, forming one of the series of the "Causeries de Lundi." Chateaubriand's narrative, in the eighth volume of the "Memoires d'Outre Tombe," is also of interest. It not only gives some facts in regard to Mme. Récamier not recapitulated by Mme. Lenormant, but it contains some extracts from an unpublished manuscript of Benjamin Constant. Its significance to those who desire to understand fully Mme. Récamier's character is increased by the fact, that she not only saw it herself, but furnished a part of the material which, according to Mme. Lenormant, Chateaubriand inserted in his work without any change.

Guizot, Lemoine, Mme. d'Hautefeuille, and others also have published sketches of more or less interest; but, though all of these authorities aid the reader in forming an opinion of Mme. Récamier, none can, in fulness and variety of

information, supply the place of Mme. Lenormant's work, which alone, in spite of its defects, deserves to be considered as a biography. And, however much other accounts differ from this with regard to some trivial matters of fact, they agree with it in testifying to the rare beauty of Mme. Récamier's character, and the power she exerted over all who came within the sphere of her influence.

So remarkable was this influence, that it is interesting to try to analyze it. It did not lie in her beauty and wealth alone; for she lost the one, while time dimmed the other. Nor was it due to power of will; for she was not great intellectually, and, had she been a person of strong convictions, she never would have been so universally popular. As it was, she pleased persons of every shade of opinion and principle. Her instinctive coquetry can partly account for her sway over men, but not over women. What, then, was the secret of her influence? It lay in the subtile power of a marvellous tact. This tact had its roots deep in her nature. It was part and parcel of herself, the distinguishing trait in a rare combination of qualities. Though nurtured and ripened by experience, it was not the offspring of art. It was an effect, not a cause; not simply the result of an intense desire to please, regulated by fine intuitive perceptions, but of higher, finer characteristics, such as natural sweetness of temper, kindness of heart, and forgetfulness of self. Her successes were the triumph of impulse, rather than of design. In order to please, she did not study character: she divined it. Keenly alive to outward influences, and losing in part her own personality when coming in contact with that of others, she readily adapted herself to their moods; and her apprehension was quick, if not profound. It is always gratifying to feel one's self under-

stood, and every person who talked with Mme. Récamier enjoyed this pleasant consciousness. Her instincts were unerring, and her mind was appreciative, if not original. The genuine admiration she felt for her literary friends stimulated as well as gratified them. She drew them out; and, dazzled by their own brilliancy, they gave her credit for thoughts which were in reality their own. To this faculty of intelligent appreciation was added another still more captivating. She was a good listener. "*Bien écouter c'est presque répondre*," quotes Jean Paul, from Marivaux; and Sainte Beuve says that Mme. Récamier listened "*avec séduction*." The repose of her manner made her sympathy more effective. Hers was not a stormy nature, but calm and equable. If she had emotion to master, it was mastered in secret, and not a ripple on the surface betrayed the agitation beneath. She had no nervous likes or dislikes, no changeful humors, few unequal moods. She did not sparkle, and then die out. The fire was always kindled on the hearth, the lamp always serenely burning. Some women charm by their mutability; she attracted by her uniformity. But in her uniformity there was no monotony. Like the continuous murmur of a brook, it gladdened as well as soothed.

This steadfastness of soul entered largely into all her social relations. Constant in her affections, she never lost a friend through waywardness, or alienated one by indifference. Sainte Beuve prettily said of her, that she brought the art of friendship to perfection. Coquettish, she was seldom capricious. Her coquetry was owing more to an instinctive desire to please than to any systematic attempt to swell the list of her conquests. She had received the gift of fascination at her birth; and can a woman be fascinating who has not a touch of coquetry? It was as

natural in Mme. Récamier to charm, as it was to breathe. It was a necessity of her nature, which her unnatural position developed and fostered to a reprehensible extent. But, while she permitted herself to be loved, and rejoiced in the consciousness of power, she never seems to have carried her flirtations so far as to lose her own self-respect or the respect of her admirers. She was ever dignified and circumspect, though gracious and captivating. The men who began by loving her passionately, usually ended by becoming her true friends. This is greatly to her honor, but not so singular as it at first appears. Had Mme. Récamier been unmarried and free to choose, and then encouraged attentions only to reject them, she could not so readily have converted lovers into friends. In her peculiar position, she could not only repulse her admirers without wounding their self-love, but, by so doing, inspire them with more admiration and respect. Still, even in her case, there were exceptions to this rule, — exceptions which her biographer does not care to dwell upon, but which the more candid Sainte Beuve passes over less lightly, giving as authority for his assertions Mme. Récamier herself, who was fond of talking over the past with her new friends, "*C'est une manière*," *disait elle*, "*de mettre du passé devant l'amitié.*" The subtile and penetrating critic cannot resist saying of these recollections, that "*elle se souvenait avec goût.*" Still she often looked back with self-reproach upon passages of her youth; and Sainte Beuve, though he called her coquetry "*une coquetterie angelique*," recognizes it as a blemish. "She who was so good brought sorrow to many hearts, — not only to indignant and soured men, but to poor feminine rivals, whom she sacrificed and wounded without knowing it. It is the dark side of her life, which she lived to comprehend."

This "dark side" suggests itself; for, though it would be manifestly unjust to strictly judge Mme. Récamier by our standard of propriety, it is impossible to read the record of her conquests without thinking of women slighted and neglected for her sake. The greater number of her admirers were married men. That their wives did not hate this all-conquering woman is strange indeed; that they witnessed her triumphs unmoved is scarcely credible. For, while French society allows great laxity in such matters, and a domestic husband, as we understand the term, is a rarity; still, French wives, we imagine, differ very little from other women, in wishing to be considered a first object by their husbands. Public desertion is rarely relished, even when there is no affection to be wounded; for it is not necessary to love to be jealous. But, whatever heartaches and jealousies were caused by Mme. Récamier's conquests, they do not appear on the surface. She, indeed, seemed to possess some talisman, by whose spell she disarmed envy and silenced detraction. The few scandals caused by some of her early indiscretions were soon dissipated; and, to all appearances, she lived down the unpleasant rumors. Mme. de Staël wrote to her from Vienna.[1] "It must give you pleasure to know that I hear you universally spoken of as a person of perfect propriety of conduct: such is your reputation. Do not trouble yourself, therefore, about a few wounded enemies, but look at yourself in the light of general opinion." From Munich she writes again: "The Court was in Italy; but everybody here treated me with the utmost attention, and spoke of my beautiful friend with admiration. You have an aërial reputation, which nothing vulgar can touch."

[1] "Coppet et Weimar, Mme. de Staël et La Grande Duchesse Louise."

The gossiping Duchess d'Abrantes, who treats with so little charity the ladies of the First Empire, has only words of respectful admiration for Mme. Récamier. The preconceived prejudices of the admirable Mme. Swetchine vanished at a first interview. Mme. de Genlis, equally prejudiced, was alike subdued. She made her the heroine of a novel, and wrote letters to her full of affectionate flattery and extravagant affection. "You are one of the phenomena of the age," she writes, "and certainly the most amiable. . . . You can look back upon the past without remorse. At any age, this is the most beautiful of privileges; but at our time of life it is invaluable."[1]

The following passage from a paper on Mme. Récamier in "Frazer's Magazine," vol. xl., p. 264, is an excellent epitome of the sort of influence this celebrated woman exerted, and also another evidence of the light in which she was regarded by her contemporaries: —

"To be beloved (says Mme. d'Hautefeuille, in her affectionate lament), was the history of Mme. Récamier. Beloved by all in her youth for her astonishing beauty; beloved for her gentleness, her inexhaustible kindness, for the charm of a character which was reflected in her sweet face; beloved for the tender and sympathizing friendship which she awarded with an exquisite tact and discrimination of heart; beloved by old and young, small and great, by women, even women, so fastidious where other women are concerned; beloved always and by all from her cradle to the grave, — such was the lot, such will be the renown, of this charming woman! What other glory is so enviable?"

A character like this, whose leading traits we have thus outlined, must surely excite a curiosity, the gratification of which would be of itself a sufficient reason for translating the Memoirs. But the book has also many other claims to attention. It would be difficult to find any

1 "Memoires d'Outre Tombe," vol. viii.

biography that can boast of more varied subjects of interest, that is more full of anecdote, or that furnishes a greater amount of valuable information. It has an historical as well as a political interest, a literary as well as a social significance. It is a mirror in which are casually reflected the events of successive revolutions, the passions and excitements of the period, the men and women who were prominent actors in these shifting scenes. It illustrates society, gives an inside view of persons and things, and throws new light upon individual character. The value of its correspondence, composed almost wholly of letters from distinguished persons, cannot be over-estimated. Those of Chateaubriand alone form a complete autobiography of the last twenty-five years of his life, and give a better idea of this celebrated man than his own voluminous narrative, written expressly to meet the eye of the public. In the belief, therefore, that the work will prove both instructive and entertaining, it is now submitted to American readers.

I. M. L.

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MEMOIRS

OF

MADAME RÉCAMIER

MEMOIRS OF MADAME RÉCAMIER.

CHAPTER I.

1777–1800.

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JEANNE FRANÇOISE JULIE ADELAIDE BERNARD was born in Lyons, on the 4th of December, 1777. Her father, Jean Bernard, was a notary of that city. He was an extremely handsome man, of narrow capacity, and of feeble character. Mme. Bernard (Juliette Matton) was a singularly beautiful blonde, lively and *spirituelle*, clever and graceful: she had a great faculty for business, engaging in successful speculations, and amassing a fortune, which she carried safely through the Reign of Terror.

I do not know what the circumstances were that brought Mme. Bernard into relation with M. de Calonne; but it was during his ministry in 1784, that M. Bernard was appointed collector of customs in Paris, where he took up his abode, leaving his daughter Juliette at Ville-franche, in care of his wife's sister, Mme. Blachette. Mme. Récamier was fond of recalling the years passed in her uncle's house; where she had a pleasant companion in a young cousin; and a lover in Renard Humblot, à little boy nearly of her own age. She retained a very agreeable impression of this child, the first of her innumerable admirers.

After a sojourn of some months at Ville-franche, Juliette was placed as a pupil at the convent of La Déserte, at Lyons. Here she found another of her mother's sisters, a nun of the community. Mme. Récamier never forgot the time passed at La Déserte. She wrote a short account of it, a portion of which M. de Chateaubriand quotes in his memoirs. Having found this fragment entire among the few papers of Mme. Récamier that were not destroyed at her death, I insert it here.

"The night before my aunt was to come for me, I was sent for by the Lady Abbess to receive her blessing. The next day, bathed in tears, I passed over the threshold of that door, the opening of which to admit me I could scarcely remember. I was put into a carriage with my aunt, and we set off for Paris. From this serene and innocent period of my life, I turn with regret to one of turmoil. The former comes back to me sometimes like a vague, sweet dream, with its clouds of incense, its innumerable ceremonies, its processions in the gardens, its chants, and its flowers.

"If I have spoken of these childish days, notwithstanding my intention to be brief in all matters concerning myself, it is on account of the great restraining influence such days often exert upon the whole subsequent life. It is doubtless owing to these vivid impressions, received during childhood, that I have been able to retain my religious belief, though coming in contact with persons of such various and contradictory opinions. I have listened to them, understood them, admitted them, as far as they were admissible; but I have never allowed doubt to enter my heart."

When M. and Mme. Bernard settled in Paris, an old friend of the former, M. Simonard, came to live with them. He was a widower, and from that time M. Bernard and he were never separated. For more than thirty years, they had the same house, the same society, the same friends. They were, however, a great contrast to each other: M. Simonard was a short, fat little man, with a very large nose; but he had a great deal of wit and intellectual culture, and was as quick and vivacious as his friend was slow and apathetic. In this intimacy, he was the controlling intellect. M. Bernard rebelled from time to time against the tyrant whose friendship and society had become

indispensable; but, after sulking for a few days, he would resume the yoke, much to the satisfaction of both.

A devoted royalist, M. Simonard worshipped the memory of Marie Antoinette. When he came to Paris, about 1786, she was his first object of curiosity; and, after once seeing her, he eagerly sought opportunities of meeting her again. Learning that a grand hunt was to come off at St. Germain, he went there; and, hiring a horse, started for the rendezvous. As he was not in the habit of riding, he was a singular figure; but, spurring on his wretched beast, he passed the brilliant cavalcade, and quickly placed himself near the queen.

He followed the chase obstinately without losing ground, while the sweat rolled off both him and his horse. The queen soon noticed this queerly-mounted equestrian so madly pursuing her, and from time to time turned her head to see if this comical admirer would let her distance him; but he held his own.

At the turn of a road, the hunt became somewhat scattered, and the queen's suite was reduced to a small number of persons. As M. Simonard maintained his pursuit, the queen stopped; and, turning toward him with a kind, frank laugh, said, —

"How long, sir, do you intend following the chase in this manner?"

"As long, madame, as the legs of my horse will carry me." The poor beast fell, and expired on the spot. The queen laughed again, bowed, and rode off.

M. Simonard was fond of relating this adventure to people who accused the queen of being somewhat haughty.

When Juliette Bernard joined her parents in Paris, she had for a playmate M. Simonard's son, who was of her own age. A wall separated the garden of M. Bernard's house, in the Rue des Saints Pères, 13, from that of a neighbor, in which grew some beautiful grapes. The vine was trained up the side of this wall; and the children, who were in the habit of playing upon the terrace on top of it, found the temptation to help themselves to the grapes too strong to be resisted. The theft was so frequent, that the suspicions of the owner were excited,

and he put himself in ambuscade to discover the culprits Seeing the children, he called out to them in a voice of thunder, "So I have caught my thieves at last." With one bound, the boy disappeared into his own garden, leaving poor, helpless Juliette pale and trembling. Her ravishing beauty at once disarmed the fierce owner, who did not expect to find so lovely a creature in one of the pilferers of his grapes. He did his best to console and re-assure the pretty child, and promised to say nothing of the adventure to her parents.

Madame Bernard, who was quite as proud of her child's beauty as she was of her own, attached the highest importance to dress; consequently, every time she took her daughter to the play, or into society, occasions which in her maternal vanity she multiplied, the poor child was obliged to pass long hours at the toilette. They went once to Versailles, to be present at one of those grand dinners, where Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette, and the whole royal family dined in public, with all the ceremonial of the ancient monarchy. On this occasion, as the crowd passed round the table, Juliette attracted the attention of the royal family. The queen remarked that she seemed nearly the same age as the princess-royal, and sent one of her ladies to ask her mother to let her go to the private apartments of the royal family. There she was measured with the princess, and found to be a little the taller. They were both of the same age, eleven or twelve years old.

Juliette was educated at home, and her mother superintended her studies with great care. The love for music that she showed in her childhood developed, as she grew older, into a very decided taste; and, when a young lady, she played with the most skilful artists of her day. She performed on both the harp and piano, and took singing lessons from Boïeldieu. Her voice, though not of much volume, was good in tone and expression. She early gave up singing and the harp, but throughout her life took great pleasure in the piano. Her memory was fine, and she was fond of playing without notes at twilight. I have often heard her go through a whole repertory of bits of a

melancholy character from the old masters, which moved her so much that the tears would roll down her cheeks. This happy faculty gave her the power of enjoying music when she was old and blind, and by its help she often drove away sad recollections. Beautiful in face and figure, she excelled in dancing. For some years she was passionately fond of this amusement; and, when she first went into society, made it a point of honor to be the first to arrive, and the last to quit the ball-room. But this passion did not last long. I do not know from whom she learnt the shawl dance which served Mme. de Staël as a model, in Corinne. Mme. Récamier only consented to execute it while very young. One day, during the sad winter of 1812–13, which she passed as an exile at Lyons, she gave me an idea of this dance, in order to dissipate her ennui; and also, no doubt, to recall the memory of other days. With a long scarf in her hand, she went through all the poses, wherein the light tissue becomes in turn a girdle, a veil, and a drapery. Nothing could be more graceful, more decorous, or more picturesque than this succession of harmonious attitudes, worthy to be perpetuated by the pencil of an artist.

In 1791, at the church of St. Pierre de Chaillot, Juliette made her first communion at the age of fourteen.

At the time that M. Bernard sent for his daughter to come to Paris, his wife was still young, and very fascinating. They were both extremely hospitable; and led a life of ease and elegance, having a box at the Théâtre Français, and giving suppers twice a week. All clever people were welcomed at their house, and especially their compatriots, the Lyonnese. M. de La Harpe visited them, and M. Lemontey, afterward deputy to the Legislative Assembly; Barrère was also received there, and rendered more than one service to the family in the evil days of the Revolution.

Among the most constant of these visitors was M. Récamier, already an eminent banker in Paris.

Jacques Rose Récamier was born in Lyons, in 1751, where his father, François Récamier, had founded a very respectable house in the hat trade, whose most impor

tant relations were with Spain. When a very young man, Jacques was the travelling partner; and, as business took him often to Spain, he wrote and spoke the Spanish as fluently as he did his native language. He was also well versed in Latin; and, when I knew him, was still fond of quoting Horace and Virgil. His commercial correspondence was a model. M. Récamier had been a very handsome man; he was fair, with blue eyes, and marked and regular features. In person, he was tall and strongly built. It would be difficult to conceive of a more generous nature than his, one more easily moved, or more volatile. Let a friend need his time, his money, his advice, it was immediately at his service; but let that same friend be taken away by death, he would scarcely give two days to regret. "Another drawer closed," he would say, and there ended his sensibility. Ever ready to give, and willing to serve, he was a good companion, and kindly and gay in temper. He carried his optimism to excess, and was always content with every thing and everybody. He had fine natural abilities, talked and told a story well.

Confiding to imprudence, his indulgence and forbearance were so great, that he was hardly a judge of the moral value of his acquaintances. He had that perfect politeness, so common among the men of his generation; with him this was the result of his familiarity with the habits of society, and a sincere desire to be agreeable to others. Placed by his fortune at the head of the financiers in Paris, he made no blunders, receiving noblemen without embarrassment and plebeians without haughtiness. Unfortunately M. Récamier's tastes were frivolous, and he often preferred the society of his inferiors to that of his equals. While he was generous to everybody, he was the good angel of his family who worshipped him. After the Reign of Terror, when he was at the zenith of his prosperity, a crowd of nephews, to whom he gave employment, lived with him, and found in his luxurious and hospitable mansion all the comforts of life.

In 1793, M. Récamier asked for the hand of Juliette Bernard. He was forty-two, and she but fifteen, yet she received his addresses without either fear or reluctance.

Mme. Bernard thought it her duty to lay before her daughter all the objections to a marriage involving such disparity of age. But Juliette had known M. Récamier for several years; he had always been kind and gracious to her as a child, — giving her her prettiest playthings; and, having no doubt that he would prove to her a very indulgent husband, she accepted the future that was offered her, without the least apprehension. Moreover, the tie between them was never any thing but a nominal tie. Mme. Récamier received from her husband only his name. This fact may create astonishment, but I am not bound to explain it. I have only to bear witness to the truth of a statement which could have been confirmed by all M. and Mme. Récamier's intimate friends. M. Récamier's relations to his wife were of a strictly paternal character. He treated the young and innocent girl who bore his name, like a daughter whose beauty charmed his eyes, and whose celebrity flattered his vanity. They were married in Paris, the 24th April, 1793.

This marriage took place at the height of the Reign of Terror, at the darkest hour of the revolution, the very year of the murder of the king and queen. All society was then broken up, and all relationships annihilated. The sole care of each person was to bury himself in oblivion, so as to escape, if it were possible, the fate incessantly overtaking his friends and neighbors. Life passed in a sort of stupor, which alone can explain the absence of all attempt to resist this reign of executioners. M. Récamier himself told me, that he went almost daily to witness the executions. He was present at the beheading of the king. He saw the queen die, the farmer-generals and all the men with whom he was connected in business and society guillotined. When I expressed my surprise that he should force himself to look upon such revolting spectacles, he replied that he did it to prepare himself for the fate he had every reason to expect would be his own. M. Récamier, nevertheless, together with his wife's family, escaped the revolutionary axe; and this good fortune was attributed chiefly to the protection of Barrère.

The first four years of Mme. Récamier's married life

were so uneventful that they leave me nothing to record. In the meanwhile the Reign of Terror had ceased, and the restoration of order and the work of reconstruction had begun. Those who had emigrated were returning; and French society, incorrigible in its frivolity, and just emerging from prisons, exile, ruin, and death, threw itself, heart and soul, into a vortex of pleasure. Mme. Récamier did not mix at all in the society of the Directory, and had no acquaintance with any of the women who were its heroines.

During these few years of seclusion, her beauty had fully developed; she had emerged as it were from childhood into all the splendor of youth. A figure, flexible and elegant; a well-poised head; throat and shoulders of admirable form and proportions; beautiful arms, though somewhat small; a little rosy mouth; pearly teeth; black hair that curled naturally; a delicate and regular nose, but *bien-français;* an incomparable brilliancy of complexion; a frank, arch face, rendered irresistibly lovely from its expression of goodness; a carriage slightly indicative of both indolence and pride, so that to her might be applied St. Simon's compliment to the Duchess of Burgundy, —

"Her step was like that of a goddess on clouds," —

such was Mme. Récamier at eighteen.

Wherever she went, her beauty called forth a murmur of admiration, curiosity, and enthusiasm. The success of a woman did not depend at that time on the decision of an exclusive society that the revolution had swept away. Salon life no longer existed. People met each other only in public, at the theatres, in gardens, and subscription balls; and at all these places Mme. Récamier's presence was looked upon as an event. It was the epoch of a very decided revival of art, which, through the influence of David and his school, had extended to all ranks, affecting, in its idolatry of beauty, pagan forms. All these circumstances will serve to explain the quickness with which the beauty of Mme. Récamier became not only famous but popular. Among many instances of the enthusiasm she excited, I shall cite but two.

When public worship was re-established, Mme. Récamier

was solicited to hand around the purse at St. Roch, for some charitable object. She consented; and, when the time came for the collection, the church was crowded to overflowing. People mounted on chairs, pillars, on the altars of the side-chapels; and it was with the utmost difficulty, that the object of all this excitement, protected by two gentlemen, could penetrate the crowd, and hand around the purse. The collection amounted to twenty thousand francs. The other incident took place at Longchamps.

Longchamps was then a fashionable drive, where new equipages, horses, liveries, and spring fashions were first exhibited, and where on holy Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of every year, ladies vied with each other in the display of their beauty, and in the elegance and good taste of their toilettes. The brilliant cavalcade extended from la Place de la Concorde to beyond l'Arc de l'Étoile, whilst pedestrians strolling through the by-paths, or loungers seated on the border of the grand avenue of the Champs-Élysées, saluted, admired, or criticised the aristocracy borne along in their sumptuous carriages, in an atmosphere of dust and heat.

One lovely spring morning of Holy Week, 1801, Mme. Récamier drove to Longchamps, in an open carriage, with other ladies of her family. As they were obliged to proceed slowly, the crowd had a good opportunity to admire her beauty, which the splendor of the day and the brightness of the noontide sun only made more dazzling. Her name was soon whispered around, and the crowd, comparing her with other beauties present, saluted her with one voice as the most beautiful.

Of the effect produced by Mme. Récamier in society, the following anecdote is a good illustration. Mme. Regnault de Saint-Jean d'Angély and Mme. Récamier were contemporaries. The former, who was remarkable for the perfect delicacy and regularity of her features, had a high opinion of her own beauty. Once, when no longer young, she was talking of herself and of the women of her day, as one speaks of a time long past. She mentioned Mme. Récamier: other women, she asserted, had been

really more beautiful, but none produced so much effect. "I was in a salon," she added, "where I charmed and held captive every eye. Mme. Récamier entered. The brilliancy of her eyes, which, however, were not very large, the wonderful whiteness of her shoulders, crushed and eclipsed everybody. She was resplendent. At the end of a moment, however," continued Mme. Régnault, "the true amateurs came back to me."

In the summer of 1796, M. Récamier hired, furnished, from Mme. de Lévy, the chateau of Clichy, where he established his young wife and mother-in-law. He dined there every day, but generally slept at Paris, where his tastes, habits, and business called him. The short distance of Clichy from the capital made this arrangement easy. Mme. Récamier went to Clichy at the beginning of spring; and, during the fashionable theatrical season, she drove into town after dinner to the opera or Théâtre Français, where she had a box, returning to the country after the performance. At Clichy, M. Récamier kept open house. The chateau was large; and the park, finely situated, reached to the Seine. Flowers they had in great abundance; for Mme. Récamier was passionately fond of them. This charming luxury, so common in our day, had then all the prestige of novelty.

Though Mme. Récamier passed her youth under Napoleon's government, and was intimate with members of his family, she met him but twice. The first time was in 1797, under circumstances that made so deep an impression that I have often heard her speak of them.

On the 10th of December, 1797, the Directory gave a triumphal fête in honor of the return of the conqueror of Italy. It was held in the great court of the Luxembourg palace. At the further end of this court was an altar and a statue of Liberty, at the foot of which the five directors sat, dressed in Roman costume. The ministers, ambassadors, public functionaries of all ranks, were seated on benches arranged in the form of an amphitheatre, and behind them were the reserved seats for invited guests. All the front windows of the building, the court, the garden, and the adjacent streets, were crowded with people. Mme.

Récamier sat with her mother on one of the reserved seats. She had never seen General Bonaparte, but shared the general enthusiasm for the young hero. At this time, he was still very slender; and she was impressed with the grand and firm character of his head. He was surrounded by generals and aides-de-camp. To a speech by M. de Talleyrand, Minister of Foreign Affairs, he replied with a few brief, simple, and forcible words, that were received with loud acclamations. Where she sat, Mme. Récamier could not distinguish his features; so she took advantage of a moment when Barras was replying at length to the general, to rise and look at him. By this movement, she displayed her whole person: the eyes of the crowd were attracted to her, and she was greeted by a long murmur of admiration. This sound did not escape Bonaparte. He turned his head quickly to see what it was that could divert attention from him, the hero of the assembly. He perceived a young woman dressed in white; and he gave her so harsh a look, that she hastily sat down.

Of Mme. Récamier's second meeting with Napoleon, I shall speak hereafter.

I have said that Mme. Récamier did not mingle in the society of the Directory. She was nevertheless invited to an evening party given by Barras, at the Luxembourg, in the spring of 1799. M. Récamier, for business reasons, thought it advisable for his young wife to accept the invitation; and she was the more willing to gratify him, as she wished to obtain from Barras the release of a prisoner.

Her appearance, in a circle to which she did not belong, made a great sensation. Barras came forward, offered her his arm, and placed her at the head of the salon, near a lady who, though past her first youth, still retained all her grace and elegance. It was Mme. Bonaparte. Still nearer to her, almost buried in the cushions of an arm-chair, reclined a small, deformed man, whose strange appearance attracted her attention. He was introduced to her as La Réveillère-Lépeaux, one of the Directory.

At supper, Barras placed Mme. Bonaparte on his right, and gave Mme. Récamier the seat on his left. Thus, she had a favorable opportunity to speak to him in favor of the

poor priest whose release she desired to obtain. Barras listened with respectful attention to her story, and promised to interest himself in her protégé. He kept his word. The journals of the day gave an account of this fête, and published a quatrain, improvised at supper by the poet Despaze, and addressed to Mme. Récamier.

At the close of the year 1798, M. Récamier, finding the house he had occupied in the Rue du Mail, No. 12, too small, concluded to buy another, more in keeping with his fortune and his own hospitable tastes. M. Necker's name had just been stricken off the list of *émigrés*, and Mme. de Staël was in Paris trying to sell for her father his house in the Rue du Mont Blanc, now la Chaussée d'Antin, 7. M. Récamier, who had long had business relations with M. Necker, bought it; and this transaction was the origin of Mme. de Staël's intimacy with Mme. Récamier. Among the few fragments it has been my good fortune to find among Mme. Récamier's papers is this account of her first interview with the celebrated woman who became her intimate friend.

"One day, and that day marks an epoch in my life, M. Récamier arrived at Clichy with a lady whom he did not introduce, and whom he left alone with me in the drawing-room, while he joined some persons who were in the park. This lady came about the sale of a house. Her costume was peculiar: she wore a morning-gown, and a small dress-hat trimmed with flowers. I took her for a foreigner. I was struck with the beauty of her eyes and her expression. I was not able to analyze my feelings; but it is certain that I thought more of finding out, or rather guessing, who she was, than of addressing to her the usual commonplaces, when she said to me with an impressive, graceful manner, that 'she was truly charmed to know me; that her father, M. Necker,' — At these words I recognized Mme. de Staël. I did not hear the rest of her sentence. I blushed, and felt extremely embarrassed. I had just been reading her letters on Rousseau, which I exceedingly admired. My looks were more expressive than my words, as she both attracted and intimidated me. I felt at once her superiority and her genuineness. As for her, she fixed her large eyes upon me, but with a friendly scrutiny, and paid me some personal compliments, that would have been too exaggerated and direct, had they not seemed to escape her

unconsciously, thus giving to them an irresistible fascination. My embarrassment did me no harm. She understood it, and expressed the hope that she might see a great deal of me when she returned to Paris; for she was on the point of leaving for Coppet. This interview was but a passing one; but it made a deep impression upon me. I only thought of Mme. de Staël, so much did I feel the influence of that strong and ardent nature."

As soon as M. Récamier purchased the mansion in the Rue du Mont Blanc, he put it in the hands of the architect Berthaut to be repaired and furnished, with *carte blanche* as to expense. Berthaut acquitted himself with infinite taste. The buildings were repaired and enlarged. The furniture was all made to order from original designs; and consequently it was not only perfectly fashionable, but harmonious, and was the best example of the taste of the time.* So much luxury and elegance, unwonted at that period, excited a great deal of remark; and the accounts of it were highly exaggerated.

* Of this house, Miss Berry gives the following description: "Went to the house of Mme. Récamier. We were resolved not to leave Paris, without seeing what it called the most elegant house in it, fitted up in the new style. There are no large rooms, nor a great many of them; but it is certainly fitted up with all the recherché and expense possible, in what is now called *le goût antique*. But the candelabra, pendules, &c., though exquisitely finished, are in that sort of minute, frittered style which I think so much less noble than that of fifteen or twenty years ago. All the chairs are mahogany, enriched with ormolu, and covered either with cloth or silk; those in the salon, trimmed with flat gold lace, in good taste. Her bed is reckoned the most beautiful in Paris: it, too, is of mahogany, enriched with ormolu and bronze, and raised upon two steps of the same wood. Over the whole bed was thrown a great coverlid or veil of fine plain muslin, with rows of narrow gold lace at each end, and the muslin embroidered as a border. The curtains were muslin, trimmed and worked like the coverlid, suspended from a sort of carved *couronne de roses*, and tucked up in drapery upon the wall against which the bed stood. At the foot of the bed stood a fine Grecian lamp of ormolu, with a little figure of the same metal bending over it; and, at the head of the bed, another stand upon which was placed a large ornamented flower-pot, containing a large artificial rose-tree, the branches of which must nod very near her nose, in bed. Out of this bedroom is a beautiful little *salle de bain*. The walls, inlaid with satin-wood and mahogany, and slight arabesque patterns in black upon satin-wood. The bath presents itself as a sofa in a recess, covered with a cushion of scarlet cloth, embroidered and laced with black. Beyond this, again, is a very little boudoir, lined with quilted pea-green lustring, drawn together in a bunch in the middle of the ceiling." — *Journal and Correspondence of Miss Berry*, vol. ii. p. 191. — ED.

In the spring of 1799, Mme. Récamier, already established at Clichy, accepted an invitation to dinner for her husband and herself from M. Sapey, at Bagatelle. Among the guests was Lucien Bonaparte, who was immediately impressed with Mme. Récamier's beauty, and made no effort to disguise his admiration. He accompanied her in a walk through the gardens of Bagatelle, and, when she left, asked and obtained permission to visit her at Clichy. He presented himself there the next day.

Lucien Bonaparte was, at that time, twenty-four years old. His features were regular, but less strongly marked than those of Napoleon, whom he resembled. He was taller than his brother; and, though he was near-sighted, his smile and expression were pleasant. Bombastic and very consequential, he showed by his manner, that he was sensible of the growing greatness of his family. He did every thing for effect; and, while his dress was carefully studied, it was not in good taste.

His passion for Mme. Récamier developed rapidly, and he was not slow in devising a means to express it. There is something in extreme youth and innocence that daunts the boldest man. Mme. Récamier had not only never loved, but this was the first time that she saw herself the object of passion. On receiving a first love-letter, she was for awhile a little disturbed; but her instinct of womanly dignity, and the complete indifference she felt for Lucien, almost immediately suggested to her the proper line of conduct to pursue.

Lucien had given to his declaration the form of a literary composition. Mme. Récamier determined not to understand the epistle of Romeo's, and gave it back to him the next day in the presence of others, praising the talent of the author, but advising him to reserve himself for higher objects, and not waste in works of imagination the time which he might more usefully devote to politics. Lucien was not discouraged by the ill success of his romantic fiction. He renounced his borrowed name, and wrote letters to Mme. Récamier, in which he spoke openly of his ardent passion. She then saw, that the only thing for her to do was to show the letters to her husband, and

ask his counsel and support. She wanted to forbid Lucien Bonaparte the house, and proposed to M. Récamier to do so. He commended the virtue of his young wife, thanked her for her confidence, and begged her to continue to act with the same prudence and wisdom she had already shown; but represented to her, that to close his door upon the brother of General Bonaparte, and openly to break with a man in so high a position, would seriously compromise, and perhaps ruin, his banking-house. He concluded by saying, that it would not do to drive Lucien to despair, yet, at the same time, she must grant him nothing.

Lucien was not pleasing to Mme. Récamier, but she was kind-hearted, and could not see without pity the pain she inflicted; yet, at the same time, she laughed at him. Women are generally disposed to be indulgent to the follies of men truly in love with them; but the bombast of Lucien was so amusing, that occasionally Mme. Récamier could not control her merriment. At other times, his violence frightened her. This very stormy intercourse lasted more than a year. Tired at last of so unsuccessful a pursuit, Lucien's passion cooled; and, becoming conscious of the ridiculous part he was playing, he abandoned his suit. The world did not fail to interest itself in this love-affair. Lucien was perfectly willing to be considered the favored lover of the most celebrated beauty in Europe: his flatterers did not hesitate to give currency to the report that such was the fact, — happily, without success.

Mme. Récamier was not ignorant of these scandalous stories: and, although her reputation was not injured, she was extremely annoyed by them. This was her first chagrin, and the first time that her pure mind came in contact with wickedness and baseness; and, whilst her natural timidity was increased, her judgment was strengthened by the experience.

Lucien's letters are absolutely destitute of taste and naturalness. Any schoolboy could compose a better love-letter than this twenty-five-year-old tribune, whose firmness and coolness on the 18th Brumaire[1] had so con-

[1] Second month of the Calendar of the first French Republic, from Oct. 25th to Nov. 21st. — Ed

siderable an influence on the fate of France and the world. They are made up of bombast, repetitions, and platitudes; and, while they reveal a sincere passion, they also betray a fear of the ridicule he knew not how to escape. I could multiply extracts, but a few examples are sufficient.

LETTERS OF ROMEO TO JULIETTE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE INDIAN TRIBE."

"Without love, life is one long slumber."

"WHAT, more love-letters! ! ! Since those of St. Preux and Heloise, how many have appeared! . . . how many painters have tried to copy that inimitable masterpiece! It is the Venus de Medici, which a thousand artists have essayed in vain to equal.

"These letters are not the fruits of long labor. I do not dedicate them to immortality. They are not the offspring of either eloquence or genius, but of the truest passion. They are not written for the public, but for a beloved woman. They reveal my heart. It is a faithful glass, wherein I am fond of seeing myself incessantly. I write as I feel, and I am happy in writing. May these letters interest her for whom I write! May she with pleasure recognize herself in the portrait of Juliette, and think of Romeo with that delicious agitation which is the precursor of sensibility!"

FIRST LETTER OF ROMEO TO JULIETTE.

VENICE, July 27.

Romeo writes to you, Juliette. If you refuse to read it, you will be more cruel than our parents, whose long quarrels have just been pacified. Doubtless these frightful quarrels will never be renewed.

A few days ago, I knew you only by reputation; I had seen you sometimes in churches and at fêtes. I knew that you were the most beautiful [*la plus belle*]; a thousand tongues repeated your praises; but these praises and your charms had struck without dazzling me. Why has peace put me in your power? Peace! . . . it now exists between our families, but trouble reigns in my heart. . . .

I have seen you again. Love seemed to smile upon me. . . . Seated on a circular bench alone with you, I spoke to you. I thought I heard a sigh escape from your bosom. Vain illusion! Convinced of my mistake, I beheld indifference with a tranquil brow seated between us. . . . The passion which mas-

ters me is expressed in my speech; but yours bears the kind and cruel impress of pleasantry.

O Juliette! life without love is only one long slumber; the most beautiful of women ought to be impressible: happy the man who will become the friend of your heart! . . .

After this first avowal of his passion under the transparent disguise of a literary composition, Lucien wrote in his own name, without entirely renouncing the happy fiction which would have made him the Romeo to this new Juliette. He thus expresses himself:—

TO JULIETTE.

Juliette, it is no longer Romeo, it is I who address you. I have been two days in the country, and have thought constantly of you. These days have sufficed to reveal to me my position. I have passed judgment on myself, and send you the result of my sad reflections. I beg you to read them. . . . It is the last letter that you will receive from me. L. B.

A folly, when it relates to a public man, upon whom criticism is fond of exerting its malignant power, is more dangerous than a crime. Fly Juliette; avoid ridicule; soften thy misfortune by philosophy.

Self-love, protecting reason, I hear your voice. I submit to it sorrowfully; but he who does not know how to conquer himself does not deserve the respect of his fellow-men. . . . Yes, I understand you. I will fly from Juliette; but I shall always love her. I will write to her of my feelings. If she is immovable, she will forget me and my letter, and I will avoid her. But if she respond to my sighs by an enchanting smile, oh! I can no longer answer for myself. I would prefer my chains to the liberty that you are now offering me. Juliette, forget my prayers if they offend you, . . . recall me if you pity me; but always believe that he who writes to you would on every occasion sacrifice his own happiness to contribute to yours. L. B.

Some months after Lucien gave up visiting Mme. Récamier, he asked for his letters, the proofs of a rejected and mortified love. M. Sapey was intrusted with this mission. Failing to obtain them on the first application, he redoubled his efforts to accomplish his object, not even sparing threats: but Mme. Récamier persisted in her

refusal to give them up; and I, in my turn, preserve them as indisputable proofs of her virtue.

The winter of 1799 to 1800 was very brilliant in Paris. Lucien then filled the post of Home Minister. His love for Mme. Récamier was at its height; and, from motives of policy, she was obliged to accompany her husband to a fête given by him in honor of the First Consul. Mme. Récamier on this occasion wore a robe of white satin, with a necklace and bracelets of pearl. She had a decided preference for white, wearing it at all seasons, and varying only its material, form, and trimmings. She very rarely appeared in colors. At the time of her greatest wealth, she never wore diamonds. She owned some very beautiful pearls, and preferred them for herself to all other jewels. Perhaps she found a certain feminine satisfaction in surrounding herself with objects whose dazzling whiteness was eclipsed by the brilliancy of her own complexion.

On the day of Lucien's fête, his wife was ill, and could not receive her guests; so Mme. Bacciocchi took her place.

Soon after Mme. Récamier arrived, she noticed a gentleman standing before the fireplace in the salon. In the dim light, she took him for Joseph Bonaparte, whom she had met frequently at Mme. de Staël's; and she bowed pleasantly. The salutation was promptly returned, but with an expression of surprise. She saw instantly her mistake, and recognized the First Consul. Her impression of him was very different from that which she had received at the Luxembourg, and she was struck with his mild expression. Napoleon said a few words to Fouché, looking at her in the meanwhile, and making it evident he was talking of her. Shortly afterward, Fouché came behind her chair, and whispered, "The First Consul thinks you charming." Such admiring and respectful attention from a man whose glory was beginning to fill the world disposed her to judge him favorably, while the simplicity of his manners was in contrast to Lucien's. While he was talking with persons about him, he held the hand of Lucien's little daughter, a child of four years, whom he at last forgot. The child, tired of her captivity, began to cry.

"Ah, *pauvre petite!*" he exclaimed, in a tone of regret, "I had forgotten thee." More than once in after-years, Mme. Récamier recalled this excess of apparent kind-heartedness, and contrasted it with the harshness of his proceedings toward others and herself.

Upon Lucien's approaching Mme. Récamier, Napoleon, who had heard of his brother's attentions, said audibly, and in a graceful way, "And I too would like to go to Clichy."

When dinner was announced, Napoleon rose, and passed alone into the dining-room, without offering his arm to any lady. The guests seated themselves almost without regard to order. Bonaparte sat at the middle of the table; his mother, Mme. Letitia, took the chair on his right; and on his left was a vacant place, which no one dared to occupy. Mme. Récamier, to whom Mme. Bacciocchi had addressed a few unintelligible words as she was passing into the dining-room, took a seat on the same side of the table, but at some distance. Napoleon then turned sharply toward the persons still standing, and said brusquely to Garat, pointing to the seat next to him, "Come, Garat, sit down here."

At the same moment, Cambacères, the Second Consul, taking the seat next to Mme. Récamier, Napoleon said, loud enough to be heard by everybody, "Ha! ha! citizen consul, next to the most beautiful!"

The dinner was brief. Bonaparte ate little and very fast, and at the end of half an hour rose and left the room. Most of the guests followed him; and, in the bustle, he came up to Mme. Récamier, and asked her if she had been cold during dinner, adding, "Why did you not take the seat next to me?"

"I should not have presumed," she replied.

"It was your place."

"That was what I said to you before dinner," added Mme. Bacciocchi.

The guests passed into the music-room. The ladies formed a circle, facing the performers, while the men stood behind them. Bonaparte alone sat by the piano. Garat sang admirably a passage from Glück; then several artists played. After a piece by Jadin, the First Consul, tired of instrumental music, struck on the piano, and cried out,

"Garat! Garat!" This call could only be obeyed, and Garat surpassed himself in a scene from "Orpheus."

Mme. Récamier, always deeply affected by music, became so perfectly absorbed, that she gave but little thought to the people about her. Whenever she raised her eyes, however, she found those of Napoleon fixed upon her with a persistency that finally ended in making her uncomfortable. The concert over, he approached her and said, "You are very fond of music, madame?" He seemed disposed to continue the conversation; but, Lucien coming up, Napoleon moved away, and Mme. Récamier returned home.

It will be seen hereafter that this transient interview was not forgotten by Napoleon, and that he tried to connect with his court the lady with whose beauty he had been so much impressed.

CHAPTER II.

1797–1806.

State of Society. — M. de La Harpe. — His Letters. — Adrien and Matthieu de Montmorency. — Letters of Matthieu de Montmorency. — Portrait of Mme. Récamier. — David. — Gérard. — Arrest of M. Bernard. — Mme. Récamier's Narrative in regard to it. — Her References to Mme. de Staël, Bernadotte, the First Consul, and Moreau. — Account of Moreau's Trial. — Letter from Moreau. — Interview with Bernadotte.

IN order to get a true idea of the life led by Mme. Récamier, and the position she occupied during her youth, we must call to mind, that society at that time was in process of reconstruction, and was composed not only of the scattered elements of the old aristocracy, but largely also of new men of talent, either distinguished in politics or in the army, who all met at her house from a common admiration of their young and beautiful hostess. The Duke de Guignes, Adrien and Matthieu de Montmorency, Christian de Lamoignon, M. de Narbonne, Mme. de Staël, Camille Jordan, and others, who had returned from exile, were received there at the same time with Barrère, Lucien Bonaparte, Eugène Beauharnais, Fouché, Bernadotte, Masséna, Moreau, Lemontey, Emmanuel Dupaty, M. de La Harpe, and all foreigners of distinction.

M. Récamier's own position, his extensive business relations, his inoffensive and perfectly independent character, doubtless contributed to make his house a sort of neutral ground, without any color of party. Here people were always sure of meeting with a cordial reception, as every one was treated with the same politeness. Here also they met with that tone of good society, interrupted by the Revolution, the re-appearance of which was eagerly welcomed.

I have said that Mme. Récamier had known M. de La Harpe as a child, when he visited at her mother's. Her infantine grace and beauty had excited a kindly interest in the clever critic, which was very unusual in him. But it seemed to be Mme. Récamier's destiny to attract literary men. There were two reasons for this: she had a fine natural taste for literature; and the naïve, spontaneous admiration she so delicately expressed for the beauties of art or poetry was a kind of incense that artists, poets, or men of letters were fond of receiving. She had, moreover, for the sufferings of self-love, a pity and sympathy seldom accorded them, though she herself was entirely devoid of pretension or vanity. No one knew so well how to spread balm on the wounds that are never acknowledged, how to calm and exorcise the bitterness of rivalry or literary animosities. For moral chagrins and imaginary sorrows, so intense in some natures, she was, *par excellence*, the sister of charity.

Her attachment to M. de La Harpe was very sincere. She admired his talents, and appreciated his wit, and was always kind and attentive to him. He spent long weeks at Clichy, and very frequently dined with M. Récamier in Paris. When he resumed his interrupted lectures at the Athenæum, she attended them faithfully. He kept a place for her near his desk, and the attention with which he was listened to by so intelligent and fashionable a woman flattered him to the last degree. He was also very certain, that the hope of always seeing her there attracted to his course a much more numerous audience than might otherwise have attended. So much consideration from one so young excited his gratitude to an extent that fairly transformed him. In spite of the sincerity of his conversion, he had continued irascible, a little disdainful, and easily betrayed into impertinence. But to Mme. Récamier he was always mild and amiable. M. Récamier and the numerous nephews that lived with him were far from being so well treated: they (especially the young men) did not have the same charity for M. de La Harpe that Mme. Récamier had. They laughed at his gluttony, and, finding him often wanting in consideration,

had little confidence in the sincerity of his piety. The following anecdote is related by M. Saint Beuve who had it from Mme. Récamier: —

"It was at Clichy, where Mme. Récamier spent the summer. M. de La Harpe had come there to pass several days. The question came up, whether his conversion was as sincere as he pretended; and it was resolved to put it to the proof.

"It was the time of practical jokes, and one was planned which seemed perfectly fair to these lively and thoughtless young people. It was known that M. de La Harpe had been very fond of women, and that this had been one of his great weaknesses. A nephew of M. Récamier, one of the youngest and apparently the handsomest, was dressed up as a fine lady; and in this disguise he installed himself in M. de La Harpe's bedroom. Quite a story had been prepared to account for so strange an intrusion. The lady had just arrived from Paris, on pressing business, which she could not defer until the next day. To be brief, M. de La Harpe, in the evening, left the drawing-room, and went up to his apartment. Curious and silent auditors were already hidden behind screens to enjoy the scene. But what was the astonishment and remorse of these foolish youths, including the *soi-disant* lady seated near the fireplace, to see M. de La Harpe, upon entering, look at nothing, but kneel down to say a long prayer! When he rose and approached the bed, he saw the lady, and drew back in surprise. In vain did the latter try to stammer out some words of her rôle. M. de La Harpe cut it short, representing to her, that that was neither the place nor the hour to listen to her. He put her off until the morrow, and dismissed her politely. The next day he made no mention of this incident to any one at the chateau; and no person ever heard him speak of it."

M. Récamier's good-nature inclined him to match-making, in which he was very unlucky; but all his mistakes did not work a cure. He had been long acquainted with Mme. de Longuerue, a widow without fortune, and encumbered with two children, a son, and a very beautiful daughter, twenty-three years old. It was difficult to establish the young lady, on account of the poverty of the family, and M. Récamier conceived the idea of marrying her to M. de La Harpe. This unfortunate union took

place, in spite of the girl's repugnance, who felt that a celebrated name could not compensate her for accepting a husband so much older than herself. But the mother carefully concealed this state of mind from M. de La Harpe, and exerted her influence over her daughter to induce her to marry him. At the end of three weeks, Mlle. de Longuerue declared that her repugnance could not be overcome, and demanded a divorce. Poor M. de La Harpe, deeply wounded in his self-love and his conscience, behaved like an honest man and a Christian. He could not himself consent to a divorce, forbidden by the Church; but he threw no obstacle in the way of its accomplishment, and forgave the young girl the scandal of the rupture. At that very same time, to make the trial harder, M. de La Harpe was proscribed, along with other distinguished men of letters, by the measure of the 18th Fructidor (4th of September, 1797). He found an asylum at Corbeil, where Mme. Récamier went once to see him.

M. DE LA HARPE TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

May 19, 1798.

Taking all things into consideration, madame, I confess to you that I extremely dislike written explanations, which can only be very painful to me, besides being of no use. You know better than anybody how pure my intentions have been throughout this unhappy affair, though my conduct may not have been prudent.

My blind confidence has been shamefully abused. I have been deceived in every way by her whom I wished only to benefit; and God has punished me through her, for the evil I have done to others. His will be done, and may He deign to pardon her as He has me, and as I pardon her with all my heart! The more I am wronged, the less willing I am to indulge in reproaches, to which all explanations necessarily lead. The wrong has been done, and it is of such a nature that God only can repair it, since he is all-powerful. The means[1] now employed, and which are dictated solely by worldly motives, do not seem to me likely to succeed, though I may be allowed to wish them success, for the personal satisfaction of her who,

[1] The civil divorce was granted; but Mlle. de Longuerue was not satisfied with that, and wished to have her marriage broken, or rather annulled by the Church.

on account of her youth, is more exposed than any one else, and who must always be dear to me from the tie that unites us before God.

I therefore beg of you to say to her, either by word of mouth or by showing her this letter, that the letter she wrote to me did not contain any thing which does not seem very honest; and, if I do not reply to it directly, it is out of regard for both her and myself; and that, humanly speaking, I think it very natural that she should desire to legally break a union that has had such unhappy results; but which would never have been formed, if she had been as sincere with me as I was with her. I excuse her very willingly; but I do not believe, that any ecclesiastical authority will excuse her for having given, at the age of twenty-three, a perfectly free consent to a union in which her heart had no part, and the consequences of which she must have known. Her mother, no doubt, is more culpable than she, for persuading her to listen to interested motives, which Providence very soon rendered illusory, for our common and legitimate punishment. But, when the sacrament of marriage has been performed, the laws of the Church do not admit as an excuse either deceit or interest. Her claim might have been allowed, had she left me immediately, protesting against any kind of constraint or deceit whatsoever: but, having lived with me as my wife, freely and publicly, for three weeks, she will not probably be permitted to give as a plea for nullification her repugnance to consummate her marriage vow; a plea that for many reasons would not be considered valid by any court, especially by an ecclesiastical tribunal, the only one that she can invoke, since she is already divorced by the civil authority, of whom she can claim nothing more. I have only to add, that I shall make no more opposition to the steps she takes to annul the marriage before the Church than I did to the divorce in the civil courts. It is sufficient for me to remain perfectly aloof in both cases, because both are contrary to the law of God; only, if I am called upon to appear, which I do not think I shall be, I shall tell the truth, and nothing but the truth, as is my duty in every case. I have now spoken according to my heart and conscience, and I hope that she may be satisfied.

I have forgotten, in my pre-occupation, to thank you for the charming present you have so kindly made me. You know that I am now expecting another, upon which I shall set a still higher value, and which will always be very dear to me, on account of my tender admiration for you. L. H.

It is a long time, madame, since I have had the pleasure of talking with you; and, if you are sure, as you must be, that it is a privation to me, you will not reproach me for it.

I should be only too happy to acknowledge all your kindnesses; but this my duties will not permit. You read my heart; you see that I have been grieving over public misfortunes and my own faults. Feeling that this melancholy disposition of mine contrasts too strongly with the brilliancy of your beauty and youth, I fear, that, in the few moments that it has been permitted me to pass with you, this temper has manifested itself, and I throw myself upon your indulgence.

But now, madame, that Providence seems to promise us a brighter future, to whom could I better confide my delight in these sweet and proximate hopes than to you? for who will have greater sympathy with these personal joys that will be blended with the public rejoicings? Such, madame, are the thoughts that frequently occupy me, as I think often of you; and which this happy change that now seems approaching, and which I have been long expecting from the Divine goodness, has awakened in me. Others may not have the same confidence in Him who orders all things. Consequently, it is only to you that I enjoy opening my heart, confident as I am of your sympathy. You yourself have been pleased to order me not to keep you ignorant of what concerns my destiny; and, as that is linked with public matters, I cannot render you a more faithful account. This is also a new proof of the attachment, sincere as it is respectful, that I have consecrated to you for ever. L. H.

If you are ill, beautiful and charming Juliette, it is the only wrong thing of which you are capable; but you are mistaken about our lecture on Zaire, which is for to-morrow. I do not yet give up the hope of seeing you there. It does not seem to be natural, that you should be ill two days in succession: one is already too many.

I am at your command Thursday, and on all days, as you well know; and of this you seldom take advantage, so you are far from imposing upon me. It is not very meritorious to go as far as Clichy to see you; but, formerly, I should have found this a little dangerous, no matter where. Adieu, madame: get well, I beg of you, and come to-morrow, when you will be perfect. Ought you not to be so? I love you as one loves an angel, and I hope that there is no danger in that. L. H.

It was in 1799 or 1800, that Mme. Récamier became acquainted with Adrien and Matthieu de Montmorency. They were cousins-german, nearly of the same age; and, though very unlike in character, were dear and intimate friends from childhood.

Adrien de Montmorency, Prince, and afterward Duke de Laval, was the first of the two to know Mme. Récamier. He was, at that time, thirty years old, tall, slender, and fair. His figure was both elegant and awkward; he was near-sighted, and a hesitancy in his speech detracted with some people from his reputation for wit. He possessed it nevertheless. Adrien was fond of reading, and keenly enjoyed lively conversation, in which he bore his part with tact and good grace. He had more imagination than sensibility. He was generous and chivalric, sincerely religious, but of rather a fickle nature, of perfect integrity and extremely loyal. He carried into the Chamber, as peer of France, moderate opinions; and, when he was ambassador, worthily represented his country abroad. He was extremely proud of the name of Montmorency; and, when he lost his son, the heir of that great name, he suffered as keenly from his pride of race as from his affection as a father. Adrien de Montmorency had not mixed in politics, when he emigrated. He served some time in Condé's army, and afterward went to England.

Matthieu Jean Félicité, Viscount, afterward Duke de Montmorency, was born in Paris, the 10th of July, 1760. His first military service was in America, in the Auvergne Regiment, of which his father was colonel. He was married very early in life to a lady without beauty, Mlle. de Luynes, by whom he had one daughter. With all the impetuosity of his youth and temperament he gave himself up to the pleasures of the great world, which were very dissolute at this period; and to the intoxication of a reciprocated passion.

He was an intimate friend of Mme. de Staël, and belonged to that small number among the chief aristocracy of France who had embraced liberal ideas. It was on a motion of Matthieu de Montmorency, deputy to the States-General, that the National Assembly abolished, on the

night of the 4th of August, the privileges of the nobility. He emigrated in 1792; and in Switzerland, where he had sought an asylum, heard of the execution of his brother, the Abbé de Laval, whom he tenderly loved. This dreadful news was like a thunderbolt to Matthieu, and almost deprived him of reason. In his grief he accused himself of the death of this brother, a victim of that revolution whose doctrines he had embraced; and his remorse, like all the other emotions of his passionate nature, was very intense.

Mme. de Staël's friendship, her delicate sympathy and sagacious kindness, succeeded in softening his grief; but it was religion alone that brought him peace. From that time, this impetuous, captivating, frivolous young man became an austere and devoted Christian.

When Matthieu de Montmorency was introduced to Mme. Récamier, he was between thirty-seven and thirty-eight years old; and still bore, in his fine and noble face, the traces of suffering. He was tall and fair, like his cousin, but not so slender; and, when he became bald, which was early, his silky hair formed a crown, like a glory, around his well-shaped and noble head. His manners were extremely dignified and elegant, and his perfect politeness and somewhat haughty courtesy kept people at a distance. Naturally fiery, it was evident that the composure and serenity now habitual with him were only the results of self-restraint. His charity had no bounds. Though his passions were under control, his heart was still tender; and there was a warmth in his friendship that made intercourse with him singularly pleasing. A Catholic through profound convictions, he had for Mme. de Staël, notwithstanding their difference of faith, a warm and deep affection. Alive to her weaknesses, he regarded them with tender compassion, and always hoped to be able to aid her in conquering them.

I do not know whether M. Montmorency could be properly called a man of intellect. His mind certainly was not as comprehensive as his heart was large and noble; but in his opinions, feelings, and language, he evinced a rare delicacy and discrimination. The remembrance of

the excesses of his youth, tempered his severity; and the austerity of his life after his conversion added respect to the authority that he easily exercised over all who came in contact with him.

Between him and Mme. Récamier the most entire sympathy was established. M. de Montmorency loved her for her rare combination of qualities; her purity of heart, goodness that might be termed celestial, and proud, lofty, and tender nature. His friendship was the more intense because it was never free from inquietude. He was constantly thinking of the dangers to which she was exposed from her incurable desire to please, and from so much frivolous but intoxicating homage that could not but be injurious. His love for her was paternal, and he watched over her with a jealous solicitude. In all the sad or perilous circumstances of her career, he was ever ready to console, counsel, and encourage; and often succeeded in restoring her energy in moments of despondency and disgust, so frequent in a life as empty as it was brilliant. M. de Montmorency well knew, that this love of admiration, and the absence of the close affections of domestic life, were formidable perils to the virtue of his charming friend. Throughout his correspondence, he tried to make her understand this danger. His letters are peculiar evidence of an affection, the delicacy and purity of which were only equalled by its depth and vivacity.

M. DE MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

1802.

If that were possible, you are too kind and generous. You are pleasantly punctual with regard to your debts, even on the days of opera and full dress. You will pardon me another sermon on dress, when it deprives me of the pleasure of seeing you.

I shall not dispense all your bounty to the persons of whom I spoke to you yesterday, but keep this little fund for more interesting charities. I am happy in being the medium of your good works, and in thinking with all my heart that one can never talk with you a few moments without finding a new reason for loving and esteeming you the more. Judge what this

will be when all our beautiful hopes shall be realized. I thank you again, madame, for myself and the poor.

When their intimacy became closer, we see Matthieu de Montmorency playing the part both of a tender friend and a Mentor. In the latter character, he was the more severe, from the deep love he bore Mme. Récamier, and his desire for her eternal salvation.

M. DE MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

1803.

What charming things you know how to say and feel! What balm you apply to the wounds that in another way you inflict upon a sincere friend! Ah! madame, you regard me with too indulgent an eye, and your partiality leads you to over-estimate instead of judging me; but I am willing to appear to you a thousand times better than I am. I would like to unite the rights of father, brother, friend, to obtain your friendship, your entire confidence, in order to persuade you for your own happiness. I want to see you entering upon the only road that can conduct you to it, — the only road worthy of your heart, of your mind, of the sublime destiny to which you are called; in one single word, to make you *take a firm resolution.* For every thing depends upon that. Must I confess it to you, that I seek eagerly and vainly for some indication of it in your actions, and in those little involuntary details of conduct, none of which escape me? Nothing, nothing reassures me; nothing satisfies me. Ah! I cannot disguise it, I come away feeling much depressed. I tremble to see you threatened with the loss of true happiness, and myself with the loss of a friend. God and yourself forbid me to be entirely discouraged, and I obey. I shall pray to Him incessantly, that He may open your eyes, and convince you that a heart that loves Him truly is not so empty as you imagine. He only can inspire you with a true love, not transient, but constant and sustained, for those duties and occupations which are consistent with the goodness of your heart, and which will occupy in a pleasant and useful manner much of your time. I was not jesting when I asked you to aid me in my work for the Sisters of Charity. Nothing would be more precious or pleasant to me. This would spread a peculiar charm over my work which would overcome my idleness, and give me a new interest in it.

Do all those things that are good and kind, and that will cause no heart-breaks or leave regrets behind. But, in the

name of God, renounce what is unworthy of you; and what, under no circumstances, can render you happy.

Be assured that it is not possible to measure in advance the infinite mercy of Him to whom you desire to address yourself sincerely, nor the marvellous and totally unexpected changes that He works in hearts regenerated by a true piety. I count the days that still separate you from this regeneration, so much desired by your best friends. I also count the days that pass by without seeing you, and I accept the appointment for Tuesday.

Allow me to remind you of the books that I had the pleasure of lending you. Do not neglect to read a few pages in them every morning. I think that I have spoken to you already of "The Meditations on the Mercy of God," by Mme. de La Vallière, in which you will be doubly interested on account of the author. You have told me that your softened heart often turns to God. Preserve and cultivate this excellent habit. I hope that our thoughts have already met, and will often meet on this road. My fondest wish, which you will pardon me for expressing, is, that you may always find your gayeties, and many of the people who are styled amiable, a little tiresome. Is not that a very naughty wish? However, I protest that my intentions are good.

I am not without fear of the daily effects of a frivolous society, which can do you no good, and to which you yourself are superior. When you have read nothing serious during the day, have scarcely found a few moments for reflection, and have passed three or four evening hours in a certain atmosphere, contagious in its nature, you persuade yourself then that your convictions are not settled, that it is necessary to begin again an examination which, once made, ought to be leaned upon as a foundation not to be shaken. Thus you get discouraged and frightened. Ah! I beg of you, in the name of that deep interest which you do not doubt, in the name of my many sad personal experiences, not to give way to these injurious tendencies. Guard against any retrograde movement, which would render you inconsolable in the future. Nor is this sufficient; do not advance very quickly, if you feel you have not the strength for it, but at least take some steps forward. Put your faith in the tenderest of hearts, and in the wisest of counsels. I hope you have not forgotten your promise to devote, daily, half an hour to consecutive and serious reading. These two conditions are indispensable; and also a few moments to prayer and meditation. Is this too much to ask for the greatest, one might say the only, interest of life?

It was in 1800 that Mme. Récamier sat for her portrait to the celebrated painter David. The sketch he made was thought by many not to do her justice, and David himself was not wholly satisfied with it. It was laid aside, not, as it has been said, from a caprice of Mme. Récamier, but of the artist's own accord. This sketch, which shows the hand of a master, is very interesting to amateurs as an example of the processes pursued by the head of the French school in painting. It was offered for sale with other pictures of his, in 1829, by David's heirs; and was bought by M. Charles Lenormant, for six thousand francs. Some months afterwards, it was sold by him to the Museum of the Louvre for the same sum.

M. Récamier was very anxious to have a portrait of his wife. When he saw that David had thus, in a measure, abandoned the work he had undertaken, he applied to Gérard, who eagerly accepted the commission. This picture is very satisfactory as a likeness, and one of his most beautiful creations.[1] Gérard was a very accomplished man, but exceedingly satirical. Like most artists, he was of a changeable, irritable temper; and, like all men accustomed to success, he had very little control over his caprices. When Mme. Récamier's portrait was almost finished, several of her friends asked permission to see it, and to be present at the last sittings. Their presence in the studio, and perhaps their comments, annoyed the artist; but he controlled himself. There was to be one more sitting for some re-touches; and Christian de Lamoignon, an intimate friend of Mme. Récamier, who had not seen the picture, begged permission to be present at it. Mme.

[1] The celebrated whole-length portrait by Gérard, though exquisitely beautiful, is one which I always looked at with pain and regret. It is not thus that a woman of pure mind and irreproachable life ought to be transmitted to posterity. The low morality, and (its natural offspring) the coarse and depraved taste of the period at which this picture was painted, have tinged it with a character which is not satisfactory to those who loved her. It was the property of Prince Augustus of Prussia. On his death in 1842, it was sent back from Berlin to Mme. Récamier. I happened to call soon after. As I was going out, she took me by the hand, and led me to the picture, which hung in the antechamber, and said, "This is what I was forty years ago, when I was in England." — *Fraser's Magazine*, 1849. — ED.

Récamier had too fine a perception not to have noticed how much disturbed the artist had been by the previous visits and remarks of men of fashion; and she said to M. de Lamoignon, that, on account of Gérard's temper, she hesitated about giving her consent. "Oh!" replied M. de Lamoignon, "that might be the case with any one but me. Gérard has always been very pleasant to me: so, if you do not forbid me to come, I am confident that it will give him pleasure."

The next day, during the sitting, a knock was heard at the door. Mme. Récamier suspected that it was Christian de Lamoignon; but, seeing Gérard's face darken and his eyebrows contract at the thought of an unwelcome visitor, she said very timidly, "Somebody is knocking, M. Gérard. It is probably M. de Lamoignon, who has great admiration for you."

Another knock; and this time M. de Lamoignon announced himself. "It is I, M. Gérard, Christian de Lamoignon, who begs the favor of admission."

Gérard, furious, half opened the door; his pallet in one hand, and his *garde-main* in the other. "Come in, sir," he said to him, "come in; but afterward I shall destroy my picture." He almost pushed him into the studio, repeating his threat. M. de Lamoignon, with much forbearance and good taste, concealed his annoyance at the freak, and said, bowing, "I should be in despair, sir, to deprive posterity of one of your *chefs d'œuvre*," and left.

It was during this same year 1800, that M. Bernard was appointed Postmaster-General, of which office he was deprived in 1802, having incurred the displeasure of the Government. Among Mme. Récamier's papers is this account of the event:—

"My relations with Bernadotte, are too closely connected with a very sad and important circumstance in my life to be ever forgotten. The service which he rendered me is stamped for ever on my memory.

"In the month of August, 1802, when my father was fulfilling the duties of Postmaster-General, the alarm of the Government was excited by a very active correspondence carried on by the Royalists. Divers pamphlets, written in the same spirit,

were circulated in the South, without the authorities being able to find out how they were transmitted. It had been suspected for a long time, that it was through the medium of a public functionary, — the head even of the administration; for it was under cover of my father, in fact, that all these clandestine writings were passing. He had not taken any of his family into his confidence, and my mother and I were in the most perfect security.

"One day Mme. Bacciocchi, sister of the First Consul, who wanted to know M. de La Harpe, asked me to invite her to dinner to meet him. I consented, though the degree of our intimacy did not in the least warrant her making such a request; but the ladies of the First Consul's family had already begun to assume princely manners, and seemed to think that they conferred honor upon their entertainers. The only ladies present were Mme. Bacciocchi, Mme. de Staël, and my mother. The gentlemen were M. de La Harpe, M. de Narbonne, and M. Matthieu de Montmorency. The dinner was pleasant, as one might presume it would be, from the presence of M. de La Harpe, Mme. de Staël, and the taste that Mme. Bacciocchi then affected for letters.

"Just as we left the table to go into the drawing-room, a note was handed to my mother. Uneasy about what it might contain, she glanced her eyes over it; and, with an exclamation of pain, fainted away. When we had succeeded in restoring consciousness, I anxiously questioned her. She handed me the note. It contained the news of my father's arrest, who had just been confined in the prison of the Temple. This was a great shock to all present. Though overwhelmed by so painful an event, the consequences of which I did not dare to face, I felt the necessity of overcoming my grief. Summoning up all my strength, I approached Mme. Bacciocchi, who seemed more embarrassed than concerned. 'Madame,' I said to her, with a voice that faltered through emotion, 'Heaven, that has made you witness of our misfortune, intends, beyond doubt, that you should be the instrument of saving us. I must see the First Consul this very day. This is absolutely necessary. I rely upon you, madame, to obtain me an interview.' — 'But,' said Mme. Bacciocchi, with embarrassment, 'it seems to me that you had better see Fouché first, and ascertain exactly the state of things; then, if it is necessary for you to see my brother, you may come to me, and we will consider what can be done.'

"'Where shall I find you, madame?' I replied, not allowing myself to be discouraged by the coldness of her manner.

"'At the Théâtre Français, in my box, where I am to join my sister.'

"Such an appointment, at such a time, made me tremble. Still, it was not the moment to show my feelings. I ordered my carriage at once, and hastened to Fouché. He received me as if he knew perfectly well what brought me there. He listened in silence, and replied briefly to my questions. 'This affair of your father is very serious; but I can do nothing about it. See the First Consul this very evening, and get him to promise that the arraignment shall not take place. To-morrow it will be too late. This is all I have to say.' I left in an anguish of mind impossible to describe. My only hope was Mme. Bacciocchi; and I resolved, cost what it might, to meet her at the place appointed. When I arrived at the theatre, I could scarcely stand. The noise, the crowd, the lights, produced a strange and painful sensation. Wrapping myself up in my shawl, I was conducted to Mme. Bacciocchi's box, during an *entr'acte*.

"She was there with Mme. Leclerc; and, in recognizing me, she could not conceal an expression of keen annoyance: but I was sustained by too strong a feeling to pay any regard to that.

"'I have come, madame,' I said, 'to claim the fulfilment of your promise. I must see the First Consul this evening, or my father is lost.'

"'Well,' replied Mme. Bacciocchi, coldly, 'let us see the end of the tragedy; and, when it is over, I am at your service.' There was nothing to do but to wait; so I sat down, or fell, rather, into a chair in the remotest corner of the box. Luckily for me, it was a stage-box, very deep, and dark enough to allow me to give myself up without restraint to my heart-breaking thoughts. I noticed then, for the first time, in the opposite corner, a man, whose large black eyes were fixed upon me with so warm and profound an interest that it touched me deeply. After having endured so much coldness, it was some consolation to meet with a little kindness and compassion. At this moment, Mme. Leclerc, turning abruptly to me, asked if I had seen Lafont before in the rôle of Achilles; and, without waiting for an answer, she added, 'He is very handsome; but to-day he has a helmet on which is dreadfully unbecoming.' At this idle question, and these frivolous, cruel words which showed so much indifference for my situation, my unknown friend allowed a movement of impatience to escape him; and this conduct, no doubt, decided him to cut short my agony. Inclining forward to Mme. Bacciocchi, he said to her in an undertone, 'Mme. Récamier appears to be suffering. If she will allow me, I will escort her home, and take it upon myself to speak to the First Consul.'

"'Undoubtedly, yes,' eagerly replied Mme. Bacciocchi, delighted to be relieved of a disagreeable task. 'Nothing could be more fortunate for you,' she said, turning to me. 'Confide in General Bernadotte: no one is better able to serve you.'

"I was so anxious to leave, and to escape from the burden of an obligation that had already cost me dear, that I at once accepted General Bernadotte's offer. He waited upon me to my carriage, and took a seat by my side. During the drive, he tried to re-assure me, and repeated to me so often that he was sure of obtaining a promise from Bonaparte that my father should not be arraigned, that I reached home somewhat comforted. He left me to proceed to the Tuileries, promising to bring me back an answer the same night, whatever its nature.

"My father's arrest was the news of the day. Interest, curiosity, and even malignity, had brought a crowd of people to my house. All Paris was in my drawing-room. I had not the courage to make my appearance: so I retired to my chamber to wait for Bernadotte, and counted the minutes until his return. He came at last, happy and triumphant. By force of entreaty, he had obtained a promise from the First Consul that my father should not be indicted; and he hoped, he said, that it would not be long before he was set at liberty. I had no words to thank him.

"But, though I was entirely re-assured as to the issue of the event, the night was not one of repose. I passed it in planning how to see my father, and tranquillize him in regard to his own situation. This was not easy. He was in close confinement. Notwithstanding this, I was resolved to run any risk to see him. Having already had permits to visit the Temple, where prisoners in whom I was interested had been confined, I had made friends with some of the officials. I therefore went there early the next morning, under pretext of one of these usual visits, and persuaded a keeper, called Coulommier, who was devoted to me, to procure me a moment's conversation with my father. He conducted me with the greatest precautions to his cell, where he left me.

"My father had scarcely time to express his joy at seeing me, or I to tell him in a few words what I had done, when Coulommier ran in, pale and frightened. Without a single word, he seized me by the arm; and, opening a door, pushed me into a sort of dungeon, shut me in, and left me in utter darkness. All this was done so quickly, that I had no time to recover myself. Leaning mechanically against the door of my prison, I heard the sound of steps and confused voices, then a hush. It seemed as though a parley were going on; and, from the solemn, measured tone of the words, I knew that it was of an official charac-

ter, but I could not distinguish what was said. Again I heard the noise of steps, doors opening and shutting; then all was still. I now expected to be released; but I waited in vain, hearing nothing but the quick beating of my own heart. I began to be alarmed; and, as I had no means of measuring the lapse of time, moments seemed ages. Thought succeeded thought with frightful rapidity. Had they removed my father to another prison? Had they given him another keeper? Was Coulommier suspected on my account? Did he not dare to release me? How long would my captivity last? At this question, I felt a cold chill run over me. Mingled with my own anxieties was the memory of all the suffering which these gloomy walls had witnessed. Here the royal family had passed their last painful hours upon earth. I thought I saw their noble spirits hovering around me. Little by little, I ceased to think, and fell into a kind of stupid despondency. I was almost unconscious, when a noise of keys turning in locks revived me. In a few moments, my door was opened, and I sprang out into the light in a transport of joy.

"'I have had a great fright,' said Coulommier. 'Follow me quickly, and never ask me to do such a thing again.' I then learned that my father had been taken to the Prefecture of Police to be interrogated, and that my confinement in that little dungeon had lasted more than two hours.

"Bernadotte, in the meantime, had not abandoned the task he had undertaken. He came to me one morning, holding in his hand the order for my father's release, which he handed to me with that chivalric grace so characteristic of him. He requested as his only recompense, that I should allow him to accompany me to the Temple to free the prisoner. This was a happy day. As I had anticipated, my father lost his situation. The Government had a perfect right to remove him.

"The emperor, at St. Helena, recalled this circumstance. According to him, —

"'He was scarcely First Consul when he found himself clashing with the celebrated Mme. Récamier, whose father was Postmaster-General. Napoleon, upon first taking the reins of the Government, was obliged to sign on trust a number of lists; but he very soon established a strict inspection over every department. He discovered that a correspondence with the Chouans was going on, under cover of M. Bernard, the father of Mme. Récamier. He was immediately removed, and was in danger of being brought to trial, and condemned to death. His daughter hastened to the First Consul, and, through her solicitations, her father was not tried; but Napoleon was resolute with regard to his dismissal. Mme. Récamier, accustomed

to obtain every thing, aimed at nothing less than the restoration of her father to office. Such was the state of morality of the times, that this severity on the part of the First Consul caused great outcries. People were not used to it. Mme. Récamier and her party, which was numerous, never forgave him.'[1]

"I did not make any outcry, as the Memorial states; nor did I run to the First Consul or address to him any solicitation, for Bernadotte alone managed the whole thing. I considered the removal of my father as an inevitable misfortune, and made no complaints."

I here interrupt Mme. Récamier's narrative to insert a letter from Bernadotte, confirming this statement: —

13 Ventose.[2]

I expected, during the morning, the memorial that Mme. Récamier was to have sent to me. This paper, which is to determine the release of M. Bernard, is required by the Minister of Police. The persons concerned, seem kindly disposed: the moment is favorable, and not to take advantage of it would be a mistake. Mme. Récamier will feel that there is no time to lose.

If M. Récamier, in the conversation that he was to have with General Bonaparte, has obtained the release of his father-in-law, all further steps will be superfluous. If this be so, I beg that Mme. Récamier will apprise me of it. The very sincere interest that I take in all that concerns her will assure her of my pleasure at this good news. If, on the contrary, things are at the same point, it is necessary to act at once.

As unexpected business will oblige me to go to-morrow into the country, I shall be glad to be informed of the state of affairs before seven o'clock this evening. This knowledge is necessary to me. It will regulate my course with the minister, and there is need of it even in regard to the General.

M. Récamier had not seen General Bonaparte, and the success was due only to the energetic proceedings of Bernadotte.

Mme. Récamier thus continues: —

"The following year (1803), Mme. de Staël was exiled by

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[1] Mémorial de Saint Hélène, t. i. p. 335, edit. de 1842.

[2] Sixth month in the calendar of the first French Republic, from 19th February to 20th of March, called the Wind-month. — Ed.

the First Consul. I received her at St. Brice,[1] and was witness to her despair. She wrote to Bonaparte, 'You would be treating me cruelly! I should have a page in your history.' I had a passionate admiration for Mme. de Staël, and this harsh and arbitrary act showed me despotism under its most odious aspect. The man who banished a woman, and such a woman, who caused her such unhappiness, could only be regarded by me as an unmerciful tyrant; and from that hour I was against him, against his elevation to the throne and the establishment of absolute power. Bernadotte, with whom I was intimate, confirmed me in these sentiments. He confided to me his hopes and fears. It was time, he said, to curb the ambition of Bonaparte, who, not content to usurp all the power, wished to make it hereditary in his family.

"Bernadotte's project was to get up a deputation, imposing from its names and numbers, which was to make Bonaparte understand, that liberty had cost France too dear for her not to defend it, and that so many sacrifices had not been made for the elevation of one individual. I saw nothing in this but what was just and generous. He communicated to me a list of Republican generals upon whom he thought he could rely; but Moreau was not among them, and his was the only name that could be opposed to that of Bonaparte. I was intimate with Moreau. The two generals met privately at my house, and had long conversations in my presence; but it was impossible to induce Moreau to take the initiative. When he left for his estate at Grosbois, Bernadotte went there to see him, and returned almost discouraged.

"The winter of 1803 to 1804 was very brilliant, from the number of foreigners in Paris, who all came to my house. Mme. Moreau gave a ball. All Europe was there, except official France; the only French people present being of the Republican opposition. Mme. Moreau, young and charming, did the honors with perfect grace. Notwithstanding the great crowd, the rooms seemed empty to me. I was struck with the absence of all persons connected with the Government. This portentous circumstance, which placed Moreau in an isolated position, had upon me the effect of a sad presage. I noticed that Bernadotte and his friends seemed pre-occupied, and how little Moreau was interested in what was going on.

"My mind was not in tune for a ball. I rested often; and, during a quadrille which I did not dance, Bernadotte offered

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[1] I do not know why Mme. Récamier left the chateau of Clichy for that of St. Brice, which she hired for that summer. The next year she was again at Clichy.

me his arm to go out and get a little air. It was our thoughts that wanted breathing space. We retired into a small parlor, where only the sound of the music came to remind us of where we were. I confided to him my fears. He had not yet despaired of Moreau, whose position for deciding and moderating a movement he considered so excellent; but he was irritated at the thought that so many advantages might be lost. 'Were I in his place,' he said, 'I would go this evening to the Tuileries, and dictate to Bonaparte the conditions under which he might govern.' Moreau passing by, Bernadotte called to him, and went over again with all his reasons and arguments. 'With your popular name,' he said, 'you are the only one among us who can present himself, supported by the whole people. Think what you can do, what we can do guided by you, and then decide.' Moreau reiterated what he had often said, that he felt the danger with which liberty was menaced, and that he should watch Bonaparte; but that he dreaded a civil war. He held himself ready; his friends might act; and, when the time came, he would be at their disposal, and they could depend upon him as soon as the first movement was made: but, for the present, he did not deem it necessary to instigate it. He even disclaimed the importance attached to his influence. The conversation was prolonged, and grew warm. Bernadotte lost his temper, and said to General Moreau, 'Ah! you are afraid to espouse the cause of liberty; and Bonaparte, do you say, will not dare to attack it? Well, then, Bonaparte will make game of both liberty and you. She will perish in spite of our efforts; and you will be involved in her ruin, without having fought for her.'

"I was greatly agitated; but we were called for, and had to return to the ball-room. I retained a vivid recollection of this conversation; and afterward, when Moreau was implicated, with so many others, in the trial of George Cadoudal and Pichegru, I was convinced that he was as innocent of all conspiracy with them as he had been with Bernadotte.

"The details of Moreau's trial are so well known, that I shall speak only of what I witnessed myself. My mother had been very intimate with Mme. Hulot, the mother of Mme. Moreau; and her daughter and I had been friends in childhood. This intimacy we renewed in after-life. I saw her constantly after her husband's arrest, and one day she mentioned to me, that Moreau had often searched for me among his friends in the crowd that filled the court-room; and I therefore made it a duty to be present the day after this conversation. I was accompanied by a near relative of M. Récamier, a

magistrate, Brillat-Savarin. The throng was so great, that not only were the hall and galleries filled, but all the avenues to the court-house. M. Savarin took me in by the door that opened on the amphitheatre, thus facing the prisoners, from whom I was separated by the whole width of the hall. I cast a rapid and agitated glance around to find Moreau. At the moment I raised my veil, he recognized me, and rose from his seat and bowed. I returned his salutation with respect and emotion, and hastened down the steps to take the place assigned me.

"The prisoners were forty-seven in number, and, for the most part, strangers to each other. They occupied the raised seats opposite the judges. Each prisoner was seated between two *gens d'armes*. There was much deference in the bearing of the two who guarded Moreau. I was deeply moved to see this eminent captain, whose glory was then so pure and great, treated like a criminal. It was no longer a question of Republic and Republicans. It was — with the exception of Moreau, whom I am convinced was entirely innocent, — a conspiracy of faithful Royalists, who alone still struggled against the new power. Nevertheless, they had for their chief a man of the people, George Cadoudal.

"That intrepid George! In looking at him, one could not help thinking that that bold, energetic, self-sacrificing leader was to perish on the scaffold; for it seemed probable that he alone was not to be saved, since he made no effort to be. Scorning to defend himself, he only defended his friends. I heard his answers. They bore the impress of that old faith for which he had fought so bravely, and been ready long ago to sacrifice his life. When he was urged to follow the example of the other prisoners and sue for pardon, he replied, 'Can you promise me a better opportunity to die?'

"Among the ranks of suspected persons were MM. Polignac and M. Rivière, who were interesting from their youth and disinterestedness. Pichegru, whose name will be connected in history with Moreau's, was not, however, by his side, though we might fancy that we saw his spirit there; for it was known that he was not in his prison.

"Another memory, the death of the Duke d'Enghien, increased the terror and grief existing in many minds, even among the most devoted partisans of the First Consul.

"Moreau did not speak; and, after the session was over, the magistrate who had escorted me came to take me away. I passed by the prisoners' seats just as Moreau came down the steps, followed by his two *gens d'armes*. He was only separated from me by a railing. He spoke a few words of thanks in

passing, that in my agitation I scarcely heard. I understood, however, that he thanked me for coming, and begged me to come again. This interview was our last.

"The next day, at seven o'clock in the morning, I received a message from Cambacères, begging me, for Moreau's sake, not to return to the court. The First Consul, in reading the report of the session, had seen my name, and had said sharply, 'What business had Mme. Récamier there?'

"I immediately went to Mme. Moreau to consult with her. She agreed with Cambacères; and I yielded, in spite of the regret that I felt at not being able to give Moreau this proof of my attachment. I consoled myself in the society of his wife for the restraint imposed upon me.

"At the close of the trial, all business was suspended; the whole population was in the streets; no one talked of any thing but Moreau. Now that those times are passed, and the name of Bonaparte seems all-powerful, it is not possible to conceive what a slight hold on power he then had. Clavier, one of the judges of the court, replied to those who said to him that Bonaparte desired only the condemnation of Moreau that he might pardon him, 'And who, then, will pardon us?'

"The court sat during the night preceding the sentence, and all the avenues to the building were filled with an anxious crowd. The consternation was universal.

"Twenty of the accused were condemned to death; ten perished with George Cadoudal on the scaffold. The lives of MM. de Polignac and de La Rivière and others were spared; but they were imprisoned in fortresses. Petitions for pardon had been presented to the sisters of the First Consul and Mme. Bonaparte. Moreau, who had been transported for life, left for Spain, whence he embarked for America. Mme. Moreau joined him at Cadiz. I was with her at the time of her departure on this noble banishment. I saw her embrace her son in his cradle, and then return to caress him once more. (She was with child, and could not take her son.) I conducted her to her carriage, and received her last adieus. Before starting for America, Moreau wrote me the following letter: —

CHICLANE, near CADIZ, Oct. 12, 1804.

MADAME, — You will no doubt be pleased to receive news of the two fugitives in whom you have shown so much interest. After having endured fatigues of every kind, both on sea and land, we hoped to find rest at Cadiz, when the yellow fever, that bears some comparison to the ills that we had already sustained, besieged us in this city. Though my wife's confinement obliged us to remain there a month during the sickness,

we very luckily escaped the contagion; one of our servants only having caught it. We are now at Chiclane, a pretty village some leagues from Cadiz, in the enjoyment of health. My wife is in full convalescence, after having presented me with a very fine little daughter. As she is confident that you take a great interest in this event, as well as in every thing else concerning us, she has charged me to acquaint you with it and to give her love to you. I shall not dwell upon the kind of life we lead. It is excessively wearisome and monotonous; but at least we breathe freely, though in the country of the Inquisition. Be assured, madame, of my respectful attachment, and believe me ever your very humble and obedient servant.

V. Moreau.

Remember me kindly to M. Récamier.

"When Moreau was first arrested, Bernadotte, in a state of great agitation, came one day to inform me that he had been sent for to the Tuileries. The conferences that he had with Moreau at Grosbois made him very uneasy, and he feared that he might become compromised in the trial. I made him promise to come and let me know the result of his interview with the First Consul, and anxiously awaited him. Upon his return, he seemed pre-occupied, but much more tranquil. 'Well?' I said to him. 'Well, it is not exactly as I expected. It was a treaty of alliance that Bonaparte wished to propose to me. "You perceive," he said to me, in his abrupt, peremptory way, "that the question is decided in my favor. The nation has declared for me; but she needs the support of all her children. Will you march with me and with France, or will you hold yourself aloof?"' Bernadotte did not tell me how he had decided; but I knew at once, that, with a man of his character, the choice was not doubtful. He was not made for inaction. This was the only road open to his activity and ambition, and he must accept it. I was not mistaken.

"Bernadotte resumed, 'I had but one choice. I have not promised him affection, but a loyal co-operation; and I will keep my word.'

"I comprehended the signification of this conversation when I saw Bernadotte officiating at the coronation as Marshal of the Empire. Nevertheless, enmity always existed between him and Bonaparte; and the latter found means to give proofs of it even in the favors he bestowed upon him."

CHAPTER III.

1800–1807.

The masked balls. — Note from the King of Wurtemberg. — The Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. — His letters. — The Prince-Royal of Bavaria. — Visit of Mme. Récamier to England. — Letter from General Bernadotte. — Mme. Récamier's position toward the French Government. — Mme. Murat. — Proposition to give Mme. Récamier a place at Court. — Reverse of fortune. — Letters from Mme. de Staël and General Bernadotte.

THE first masked ball given after the Revolution took place at the Opera, the 25th of February, 1800. These balls, now no longer frequented by respectable women, were for many years the fashion in good society. No one danced there, at least not elegant people: the ladies went in dominos and masked, the gentlemen in full dress and without masks. The pleasure for the ladies consisted in puzzling, under cover of the mask, gentlemen of their acquaintance; who, in their turn, did their best to discover the identity of their fair companions.

Mme. Récamier, who was so timid without a mask, became entirely self-possessed under this disguise, and was able to converse much more freely. Mme. de Staël, on the contrary, lost much of the enthusiasm and eloquence which made her so incomparable a talker. It was the custom at these balls to use the terms "thee" and "thou" in conversation: Mme. Récamier would never submit to this. It was therefore easy enough to recognize her, especially as she never disguised her voice.

She generally went to these assemblies under the protection of her brother-in-law, M. Laurent Récamier, who was nine years older than her husband. M. Laurent was very fond of his beautiful sister-in-law, for whom he had all the indulgence of a father. These balls could not offer him any sufficient compensation for the fatigue of a sleepless

night; but he did not think it proper, that so young a person should go to them without a suitable protector, and he sacrificed himself to please her whom he treated as a spoiled child. Mme. Récamier had on these occasions several piquant adventures, and, among others, one with the Prince of Wurtemberg, who had been received at her house, and had recognized her. Emboldened by the mask she wore, that permitted him to appear not to be acquainted with her, he took her hand, and ventured to draw from it a ring. The poor prince, so it seemed to him, brought upon himself a severe lesson; and I find among Mme. Récamier's papers a little note in which he begs her pardon for his temerity. The incident is characteristic of the woman whom no one dared to treat with disrespect.

"It is to the most beautiful, amiable, but the proudest of women, that I address these lines, in returning to her a ring which she so kindly confided to me at the last masked ball. If my thoughtlessness was beyond conception, my punishment yesterday was very severe; and I am sure I shall profit all my life by the lesson."

At another masked ball began a flirtation with M. de Metternich, which lasted a whole winter. It was under the empire, and before 1810. Napoleon saw with extreme displeasure, that his most distinguished ministers and officers were assiduous in visiting Mme. Récamier. He sometimes complained of it; and one day, when three ministers had met by accident at her house, the emperor heard of it, and asked them how long it was since the council had met at Mme. Récamier's. He did not show less irritation, when foreigners and members of the diplomatic corps frequented her salon; and yet there was not one of them who did not ask to be presented to her. M. de Metternich, who was then Secretary of the Austrian embassy, was more scrupulous. The relations of his Government with Napoleon were so delicate, that he was afraid of adding any little personal trouble to great difficulties. He therefore caused Mme. Récamier to be informed of the regret he felt in abstaining from visiting her house, and of his reasons for so doing. As he had the reputation of being very agreeable, she was curious to know him; and, during a whole season

she met him at the balls at the Opera. At the close of the winter, when Lent put an end to gayeties, M. de Metternich did not wish to give up so delightful an intercourse. He went therefore to her house, but only in the morning, and at hours when he would not be likely to meet many people, so as not to give umbrage to the Imperial Police.

It was at an opera ball, that the hereditary Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, brother of the Queen of Prussia, first met Mme. Récamier, whom he was anxious to know. It was in the winter of 1808. After talking with her a whole evening, he asked permission to call upon her. She replied to him, that, though she was highly honored by his request, she felt it her duty to refuse; and gave as her reason, that no foreigners could visit her house without incurring the hostility of the emperor. The prince insisted, and wrote to her to obtain the favor of admission. Touched and flattered by this persistency, she named an evening when she received only her intimate friends. The prince arrived at the appointed hour, and left his carriage in the street at some little distance. As the avenue gate was open, he stole in without saying any thing to the porter, hoping that he would not notice him; but he, seeing a man entering the avenue, and walking rapidly toward the house, called out, and asked him what he wanted. The grand duke, instead of replying, quickened his pace; and, hearing the steps of the porter behind him, he began to run, thus confirming the servant in the suspicion that he was a thief. The prince and the vigilant porter reached the ante-chamber leading to Mme. Récamier's drawing-room at the same moment. Hearing menacing voices, she went out to learn the cause, and found the grand duke collared by her servant.

After a few moments, as the evening was mild and the moon superb, Mme. Récamier proposed a walk in the garden before the open windows of the salon. While they were talking of the situation of Europe, the prince's own position and that of his sister, the Queen of Prussia, some one was ushered into the drawing-room. Mme. Récamier left the duke in the garden, and went in to receive and dismiss this unexpected visitor. It was Matthieu de Montmo-

rency. "Are you alone, madame?" he inquired of his beautiful friend, fixing his eyes on the prince's hat that had been forgotten on the table. "Well, yes," she replied; then, bursting out laughing, she related to him the grand duke's adventure, and the fright she had in seeing a visitor arrive who might inadvertently betray the visit of the prince. M. de Montmorency went after the duke, and the rest of the evening passed peacefully and agreeably.

The prince saw Mme. Récamier incognito again several times, and wrote to her often.

THE PRINCE OF MECKLENBURG-STRELITZ TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

May I dare? Will you be so kind, so generous? May I venture to come again to-morrow at the same hour as last time? I make this request in trepidation; but, if you knew how I have it at heart, and how much it has cost me to stay away until now, perhaps you will not only excuse, but justify me. I came to this city with a heavy heart. My experiences here have been most painful. Do you wish me to carry away a still greater load of grief from having seen an angel without daring to approach her? Pray, do not consider me deserving so cruel a fate, and pardon me my seeming boldness. There is no one in the world more capable of appreciating you than I, or of cherishing for you all those sentiments which, alas! you will always inspire in every noble, sensitive heart. I repeat that I write to you in trepidation, but not without a ray of hope. G.

The sentiments with which Mme. Récamier inspired the duke were not of an evanescent character. In 1843, she received from him the following letter, which will prove that, far from exaggerating, I have rather softened the truth in regard to the annoyance which the all-powerful and victorious Napoleon felt at the opposition of the salons, and particularly that of Mme. Récamier: —

Strelitz, Dec. 1, 1843.

Madame, — If I have ever been timid, it is to-day, when I have resolved, not only to write, but to ask a favor from you; yes, a very great favor. When I think of the number of years that have passed since I have had the happiness of seeing you, or of hearing from you directly, the step I am about to take seems rash. I even feel, alas! that if you should ask, after

reading my signature, "Who is this Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz?" I should have no right to complain. This is what reason says to me; but what says the heart? Shall I confess it, madame? It says the contrary. It tells me that the ravishing beauty, with which nature had endowed you, is only the reflection of an adorable soul; and that such a soul could never forget any one whom it once judged worthy of its esteem and affection.

Among the precious memories that I owe to you is one I shall ever remember. It is the eminently noble, generous, and amiable manner you behaved toward me after Napoleon had said, publicly, in the salon of the Empress Josephine, "that he should regard as his personal enemy any foreigner who frequented the salon of Mme. Récamier." I can say, without exaggeration, that I still think of this with emotion; and that I desire most humbly and respectfully to assure you again of my fervent and everlasting gratitude.

"But what is this favor?" I think I hear you ask. It is your portrait, madame; that same admirable portrait with which you honored the late Prince Augustus of Prussia, and which, I understand, is to be returned to you. I repeat it, madame, that I make this request with great timidity: did I not have it so inexpressibly at heart, my courage might fail me. If the worship of your memory can give any one a claim to this treasure which I have just asked from your generous kindness, pray believe, at least, that nobody has a better right to aspire to its possession than I. Nor am I alone in this respect: my wife, my children, all my family, do you full justice; they have listened with pleasure to my reminiscences of you. We all look upon you as the embodiment of perfect beauty and perfect goodness. Thus everywhere you meet with a just appreciation.

I have not the courage to add another word to this letter. Your heart is made to understand it.

GEORGE, *Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz.*

Mme. Récamier wrote the prince a letter of acknowledgment, but did not send him the portrait; that was retained in her own family.

The Prince-Royal of Bavaria came to Paris nearly at the same time as the Duke of Mecklenburg, and was quite as anxious to be presented to Mme. Récamier. Her decided refusal to receive him only made the prince the more persistent, and he had recourse to the intervention of a friend.

MME. DE BONDY TO MADAME RÉCAMIER.

The Prince of Bavaria is very anxious, madame, to carry away with him a correct idea of the lady whom he has so long desired to know; and M. de Bondy has been commissioned by his royal highness to ask you to permit him to come to your house *to see your portrait*. M. de Bondy would have preferred this request himself; but, as he has been obliged to accompany the prince to St. Cloud, he has left it for me. This time it is an *official demand*, and no longer a pleasantry. M. de Bondy trusts, that you will not refuse to the Prince-Royal the privilege you have accorded to many persons, of admiring the *chef d'œuvre* of Gérard; and, if you will permit him, he will accompany his royal highness to your house either Saturday or Monday, whichever you prefer, or on any other day that is convenient to you. If you are sufficiently *evil-disposed* to go out precisely at the hour appointed, the prince may conclude, that, if fame has not deceived him in regard to your beauty, it has exaggerated the affability of your manners; and I do not think that a view of the portrait will diminish his regret at not becoming acquainted with the original. But this is not my affair: I am only commissioned to plead for the amateur in art. Your reply, which I await with impatience, I will hand to M. de Bondy on his return from St. Cloud.

Believe me, madame, sincerely yours,

H. DE BONDY.

The Prince was received by Mme. Recamier, and carried away a precious remembrance of her. In a letter from Mme. de Staël, dated at Coppet, on the 15th of August following, there is this reference, —

"I left Matthieu de Montmorency at the Swiss fête, near Berne, which M. de Sabran described to you. . . . I also met there the Prince of Bavaria, who inquired warmly after you. He told me that his regard for you and me was not approved of. He is a worthy man, with both heart and intellect."

In order to give, without interruption, the account of Mme. Récamier's own narrative and her relations with these German princes, I have been obliged to anticipate, and must now return to the period of 1802, when she made a trip to England during the short peace of Amiens. As the incidents of this journey have already been related by M. de Chateaubriand, I shall not recapitulate them.

Mme. Récamier was accompanied by her mother. She was introduced and recommended to English society by enthusiastic letters from the old Duke de Guignes, her fervent admirer, who had been ambassador to London under Louis XVI.

During her residence abroad, Mme. Récamier became intimate with the brilliant Duchess of Devonshire and her beautiful friend, Lady Elizabeth Foster, who afterward bore the same title.

The Prince of Wales paid her the most chivalric attentions; and the exiled Duke of Orleans and his two young brothers, the Princes of Beaujolais and Montpensier, were not less gallant to their beautiful countrywoman. Enthusiastically received in society, she was also an object of curiosity to the common people. For some weeks, the English journals were devoted to recording the movements of this fashionable stranger. The following letter from General Bernadotte testifies to the sensation she created:

GEN. BERNADOTTE TO MADAME RÉCAMIER.

I did not reply immediately to your letter, madame, because I was daily in hopes of being able to announce the nomination of the French ambassador to the Court of St. James. The reports, which at first had some unanimity, designated Minister Berthier. To-day he is no longer talked of, and a selection more conducive to the public good is anticipated.

The English journals, in relieving my anxiety in regard to your health, have informed me of the new dangers to which you have been exposed.[1] At first, I blamed the London people for their too great eagerness; but I must confess that I very soon excused them. I am a party concerned, when it is necessary to justify those who commit indiscretions out of admiration for your celestial beauty.

In the midst of all the attention and homage which you receive, and which you so justly merit, pray do not forget, that the being the most devoted to you in the world is

BERNADOTTE.

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1 The pressure of the crowd in Kensington Gardens, eager to get a glimpse of the beautiful stranger. This incident is related by Chateaubriand, in his memoirs, who also states that her portrait, engraved by Bartolozzi, was spread throughout England, and was carried thence to the isles of Greece. Ballanche, commenting on this circumstance, said that "it was beauty returning to the land of its birth." — ED.

Mme. Récamier returned home by way of Holland, where she visited the principal objects of interest. The following year was an eventful one in the history of France. In the month of February, 1804, Moreau, Pichegru, and Cadoudal were arrested; and, on the 21st of March, Bonaparte ordered the execution of a prince of the house of Bourbon, the Duke d'Enghien. Pichegru died in prison in April, and the empire was proclaimed the 4th of May.

The opinions and sympathies of Mme. Récamier's relatives and friends had placed her, by degrees, in the ranks of the opposition; and the arrest of M. Bernard had created a slight shade of coolness between her and the family of the First Consul. Still, she saw Mme. Bacciocchi frequently, and especially her sister Caroline. Caroline Bonaparte (Mme. Murat) more nearly resembled Napoleon than any of his other sisters. She had a dazzling complexion; and, though not as regularly beautiful as Pauline, she was of the true Napoleon type. Her intellect was bright, and her will imperious. The contrast between the almost infantile expression of her countenance and the decision of her character rendered her peculiarly charming. She was just married, and continued to atend all the parties in the Rue du Mont Blanc.

Though Mme. Récamier's indignation toward the Government was concealed, it was not the less lively. Her exterior life, however, was not changed. She still received at her house both the friends and enemies of the new power. Fouché, then Minister of the Police, was a particularly assiduous visitor. In the summer of 1805, when Mme. Récamier was at Clichy, he redoubled his visits; and, though she was surprised that so busy a man should have so much leisure for country visiting, she took advantage of his influence to aid some of the large number of unfortunate people who addressed themselves to her.

Fouché, at last, solicited a private interview, and Mme. Récamier gave him an appointment for the next day. He arrived punctually, and was admitted to a *tête-a-tête*. In the conversation that passed between them, he expressed the deep regret he felt at the shade of opposition, which, since the arrest of her father, had been deepening, little by

little, in her salon. This opposition — for which there was no reason, since the First Consul had been very indulgent toward M. Bernard — had, he said, seriously offended Napoleon; and he urgently begged Mme. Récamier to avoid showing an hostility that would only result in irritating the emperor. He cited the case of the Duchess de Chevreuse, who, young, brilliant, and eminent from her great rank and the powerful support of her connections, had, like Mme. Récamier, shown more than coldness toward the new empire. The emperor had promptly put a stop to this feminine opposition, and reminded the haughty duchess, by one of his sharp reprimands, of the origin of the great wealth of the family de Luynes, and the possibility of a new confiscation; and, added Fouché, "The house de Luynes and the Montmorencies, their allies, were only too happy to accept for the Duchess de Chevreuse a place as lady of honor to the empress. The emperor, since the day he met you, has neither forgotten nor lost sight of you. Be prudent, and do not offend him."

A little surprised at this advice, Mme. Récamier thanked the minister for his interest, and protested that she had nothing at all to do with politics, but that it was impossible for her to abandon or to separate herself from her friends. The conversation that day did not go any further.

Shortly afterward, when Fouché was walking with Mme. Récamier in the park at Clichy, he said to her, smilingly, —

"Can you guess whom I was talking with about you, for nearly an hour last evening? With the emperor."

"But he scarcely knows me."

"Since the day he first met you, he has never forgotten you; and, though he complains that you have ranged yourself among his enemies, he does not blame you, but your friends."

Fouché then insisted that Mme. Récamier should tell him her true sentiments toward the emperor. She frankly replied, that she had been attracted toward him by his glory, the brilliancy of his genius, and the services he had rendered to France; that in meeting him, and observing him closely, the grace and simplicity of his manners had

increased her favorable impressions; but that his persecution of her friends, the execution of the Duke d'Enghien, the exile of Mme. de Staël, the banishment of Moreau, had checked her enthusiasm for him, and chilled her sympathy.

Without paying any attention to what Mme. Récamier said, Fouché then boldly broached the subject that had brought him thither. He proposed to her to ask for a place at court, and took it upon himself to assure her, that this request would be immediately granted.

Such an unexpected overture struck Mme. Récamier with surprise, for she felt an invincible repugnance to the position offered her: but, promptly recovering herself, she said to the minister, that there were many reasons why she must decline such an offer, flattering as it was; such, for example, as the simplicity of her tastes, her excessive timidity, which mingling with the world had not overcome; her love of independence, and her social relations. Her husband's position, which involved constant entertainments, imposed duties upon her, as mistress of the house, incompatible with the obligations pertaining to the service of a princess.

Fouché smiled, and protested that the place would leave her wholly free: then, seizing with adroitness upon the only consideration that might make a place at court seductive to a generous nature, he spoke of the important services she might render to the oppressed of all classes, and how she might enlighten the conscience of the emperor in regard to acts of injustice. He laid stress upon the ascendency a woman of noble and disinterested character, and endowed with Mme. Récamier's charms, might and ought to exert over the mind of the emperor. "He has not yet," he added, "met a woman worthy of him; and no one knows what the love of Napoleon might be, if he attached himself to a pure person. Assuredly, he would allow her to exert an influence that would be entirely beneficent."

Fouché became more and more animated, and did not perceive the disgust with which he was listened to. Mme. Récamier thought only of repulsing, with pleasantry, the romantic fancies complacently unfolded by the Minister of

Police. Still, this conversation naturally disturbed her. She confided in no one but Matthieu de Montmorency, uncertain as she was whether these propositions of the Duke d'Otrante came from himself alone, or were made by the order of his master. M. de Montmorency, sharing all the anxiety of his friend, advised great prudence and reserve.

Some days after this interview, in answer to a gracious message from Mme. Murat, then residing at Neuilly, Mme. Récamier went to pay her a visit. She was received most cordially, and was instantly invited to breakfast with the princess the day after the morrow. Arriving at Neuilly on the day appointed, Mme. Récamier found Fouché there, whom she little expected to see. After breakfast, the princess took a fancy to go over to the island, where they could better enjoy, she said, a moment of quiet and confidential talk. After some conversation on indifferent topics, Fouché broached the subject that he had at heart.

He told Mme. Murat of his proposals to Mme. Récamier, and of her opposition. The princess, whether she was really ignorant or not of the project, seized upon it with delight, and brought forward a thousand arguments in its support, — saying, in a tone of most sincere friendship, that, if Mme. Récamier accepted a title of lady of honor, she expected and requested that it might be in her service. Mme. Murat added, that she should congratulate herself upon an arrangement that would bring her in contact with one for whom she had always had so great a fancy, and that it would be the means also of screening her from the jealousy of the Empress Josephine, who could not see so brilliant and beautiful a lady of honor placed about her own person without suspicion. As the establishments of the princesses had been put by Napoleon on the same footing with that of the empress, the rank would be the same.

When they were separating, the princess graciously recollected that Mme. Récamier had a great admiration for Talma, and put at her command her box at the Théâtre Français. "You know that it is a stage-box," she added, "where you can watch the expression of the actors." This

box was opposite the emperor's. The next day a little note thus worded placed it at the disposal of Mme. Récamier:—

NEUILLY, Oct. 14.

Her Royal Highness, the Princess Caroline, informs the managers of the Théâtre Français, that, from this date, until a new order be given, her box is to be open to Mme. Récamier, to those she brings with her, or those to whom she gives an order. Persons belonging to the household of the princesses, unless admitted or named by Mme. Récamier, cease from this time to have the right of presenting themselves there.

The Secretary of Orders to the Princess Caroline,
CH. DE LONGCHAMPS.

Mme. Récamier made use of the box twice. Either by accident or design the emperor was present on both these occasions, and showed a very marked persistence in pointing his opera-glass at the lady opposite him. The attention of the courtiers, so watchful of his slightest movements, was of course arrested by this circumstance; and it was believed and reported that Mme. Récamier was on the eve of high favor.

Fouché, in the meanwhile, had not abandoned his negotiation. He no longer kept it secret, and spoke more than once of his plan of placing Mme. Récamier at court before Lemontey, General de Valence, and M. de Montmorency. Finally, Fouché came to Clichy, in high spirits; and, taking the mistress of the house aside, he said, "You can no longer refuse. It is not I now, but the emperor who proffers you a place as lady of honor; and I am commissioned to offer it in his name." So little did Fouché imagine the possibility of a refusal, that he did not wait for a reply, but joined the rest of the company. It was now out of the question for Mme. Récamier to delay any longer acquainting her husband with the proposal, and with her invincible repugnance in regard to it. When M. Récamier came out as usual to dine at Clichy, she had a short conversation with him. He entered entirely into her views on the subject, and left her perfectly free to act as she pleased. Assured of his support, she waited more tranquilly for the return of Fouché.

In spite of the care she took to clothe her refusal in

grateful terms, she could not soften his displeasure. He changed countenance, and, carried away by his anger, broke out in reproaches against her friends, especially M. de Montmorency, whom he accused of having contributed to prepare this *insult* for the emperor. He indulged in a philippic against *the old aristocracy*, to whom, he added, the emperor showed a *fatal indulgence;* and he left Clichy never to return thither.

The painful impression that this base negotiation left on Mme. Récamier's mind was quickly effaced; and she thought, that, since she consented to forget it, no one else had the right to retain any resentment.

Never had her life been more brilliant, never had M. Récamier's affairs seemed more prosperous or been so extended. The credit of his house was immense; and he held, without dispute, the first place among the financiers of the day. But this opulent and gay existence was far from bringing happiness to her whose lot in life was thought so enviable. Domestic affection, in which the true happiness and dignity of woman consists, was a want in her life. She was neither wife nor mother; and her desolate heart, hungry for tenderness and devotion, sought compensation for the absence of love in the language of passionate admiration.

In regard to this sort of isolation, M. Ballanche wrote to her in the mystical language in which he habitually clothed his thoughts.

"What is unique in your existence is not what would have best suited you, if you had had the choice. The phœnix, wonderful but solitary bird, was very weary of himself, it is said. He fed on perfumes, and lived in the purest regions of the air, and terminated his brilliant existence on a funeral pile of fragrant woods, whose flames were kindled by the sun. But, doubtless, he more than once envied the fate of the white dove, because she had a companion like herself. I would not make you better than you are: you are conscious yourself of the impression that you produce; you intoxicate yourself with the perfumes that are burnt at your feet. You are an angel in many respects, but a woman in others."

In the absence of a reality, to which her principles, her

purity, her strict sense of duty, did not allow her to abandon herself, she pursued its phantom in the passions she inspired. The usual result of coquetry among women is heartlessness, and the world is almost always right in looking upon a coquette as a selfish person. But Mme. Récamier's desire to please grew out of the wish to be loved rather than to be admired. Her goodness and sympathy of heart were so sincere, that all the men who had been in love with her, and whose importunities she had repulsed, far from feeling any bitterness toward her, became her constant and devoted friends. She also found in acts of charity gratifications more worthy of her noble nature than in the dangerous triumphs of her beauty.

Her generosity was without limit, and it was not merely money that she gave: all unhappy people had a claim upon her interest; and, in her relations with the lowest and most repulsive forms of misery, her grace and politeness never forsook her. She gave freely herself, and incited others to give. She used all the means of influence that her wealth and station secured to her to succor the unfortunate, and to protect the weak. The only way, she said, to make the petty duties of society endurable was thus to turn them to account. Society with her was not an end, but a means.

Aided by the counsels of M. and Mme. de Gérando, she founded, in the parish of St. Sulpice, a school for young girls. The applicants for admission became very soon so numerous, that the resources of private charity alone were not sufficient to sustain the enterprise, and recourse was had to subscriptions. To her own contribution of a hundred crowns, Mme. Récamier added those donations that her friends could not refuse to her gracious tyranny.

One Saturday, in the autumn of that same year, 1806, M. Récamier came to his wife looking very much disturbed. He told her, that, on account of a series of circumstances, of which the most important was the political and financial condition of Spain and her colonies, his powerful banking-house was in a state of embarrassment: but he still hoped it would only be momentary; for, if the Bank of France would advance a million to the house of Récamier, for which good securities would be given, it would at once be relieved: but,

if the government refused to lend this sum, the house would be obliged, on the following Monday, to suspend payments. In this terrible suspense, all M. Récamier's optimism deserted him. He relied upon the spirit of his young wife, and asked her, since he could not control his agitation, to do the honors of a great dinner that they were to give the next day, Sunday, and which could not be countermanded without exciting suspicion.

Such a communication was a severe blow and a terrible revelation to a person only twenty-nine years old. From her childhood, Mme. Récamier had been accustomed to ease, comfort, and luxury. Married, while yet a child, to a man whose fortune was considerable, she not only had never been asked, but had never been permitted, to occupy herself either with any housekeeping details or pecuniary matters. Her toilette and her charities were her sole responsibility. Her charities were large; but, thanks to the extreme and elegant simplicity of her dress, she had never exceeded the sum placed each month at her disposal.

After the first shock was over, Mme. Récamier summoned all her strength; and, looking her new duties in the face, vainly tried to inspire her husband with a little courage. The uncertainty of his situation, the thought of his honor compromised, the possible ruin of so many persons whose fate was dependent on his, were tortures which that excellent but weak nature was incapable of combating. He was entirely overcome, and left for the country, more dead than alive, there to await the emperor's decision. Were it favorable, he was to return immediately; otherwise, he was to remain away until the first explosion was over.

The great dinner took place; and no one of the guests, amid the luxury that surrounded their lovely and smiling hostess, could divine the agony hidden under her smile, or the destruction that menaced the house whose honors she did with so complete an appearance of tranquillity. Mme. Récamier frequently said afterward, that, all through the evening, she felt as though she were the prey of a horrible nightmare; and that her mental suffering was so great, that natural objects assumed, to her disturbed imagination, strange and fantastic shapes.

The loan of a million, which seemed so natural a thing, was harshly refused; and on Monday morning the bank stopped payment.

Mme. Récamier did not conceal from herself, that the malice and personal resentment of the emperor toward her had something to do with this refusal She accepted her change of fortune with a serene firmness, without complaint or ostentation; and displayed, under these painful circumstances, a promptitude and a resolution which never failed her in any of the trials of her life. The effects of this catastrophe were wide spread, and a great number of smaller houses were involved in the ruin of the powerful establishment with which they were connected. M. Récamier gave up every thing to his creditors, and received from them an honorable testimony of their confidence and esteem. He was employed by them as the chief agent in the liquidation of his affairs. His noble and courageous wife sold all her jewels. They parted with their plate, and advertised their house in the Rue du Mont Blanc for sale; but, as they could not immediately find a purchaser for so valuable a property, Mme. Récamier gave up her own apartments, and reserved for herself only a small drawing-room on the ground-floor, whose windows opened on the garden. The grand suite was rented, furnished, to the Prince Pignatelli; then to Count Palffy. The residence was finally sold to M. Mosselmann, 1st of September, 1808.

The attentions Mme. Récamier received, at this time of her unmerited misfortune, were highly creditable to French society. She was the object of universal interest and respect. Her door was besieged; and those who left cards considered that they were doing themselves honor by showing sympathy with one who bore a severe reverse so nobly. Mme. de Staël wrote to her: —

GENEVA, Nov. 17, 1806.

Ah, my dear Juliette, what has been my grief at the frightful news I have received! How I curse the exile which will not permit me to come to you, and press you to my heart!

You have lost all that pertains to the ease and luxury of life; but, if such a thing could be possible, you are more beloved and more interesting than ever. I am going to write

to M. Récamier, whom I pity and respect. But, tell me, will it be only a dream, my hope of seeing you here this winter? if you would like to pass three months in a little circle, where you will be fondly cared for. . . . But at Paris, also, you inspire this same devotion. Still, I will at least go to Lyons, or to the end of my forty leagues, to see you, embrace you, and tell you that I love you better than any woman I have ever known. I have nothing to say to you by way of consolation, unless it be to assure you, that you will be more loved and honored than ever; and that, in spite of yourself, your generosity and benevolence will be known through these misfortunes, as they never would have been without them.

Certainly, in comparing your present situation with what it was, you have lost; but, if it were possible for me to envy any one whom I love, I would willingly give all I have to be you. Beauty that has no equal in Europe, a spotless reputation, a proud and generous character, — what a wealth of happiness still left in this sad life, in which we are robbed of so many treasures! Dear Juliette, let us draw closer to each other. Let it be no longer simply generous services, that have all come from you; but a regular correspondence, a reciprocal need of confidence, a life together. Dear Juliette, it is you who will be the means of my returning to Paris, — for you will always be an all-powerful person, — and we will see each other every day; and, as you are younger than I, you will close my eyes, and my children will be your friends. My daughter has mingled her tears with yours and mine this morning. Dear Juliette, we have enjoyed the luxury that surrounded you; your fortune has been ours, and I feel myself ruined because you are no longer rich. Believe me, there is still happiness left, when one is conscious of being so well beloved. Benjamin[1] wishes to write to you. Matthieu[2] has written me a very touching letter about you. May you be composed, dear friend, in the midst of these trials! Alas! neither death nor the indifference of friends menaces you, and these are eternal wounds. Adieu! dear angel, adieu!

NECKER DE STAEL HOLSTEIN.

Junot, Duke d'Abrantes, who professed a great friendship for Mme. Récamier, passed a few days in Paris shortly after her reverse of fortune, and witnessed the lively and respectful sympathy it excited. Full of interest himself, and interested in what he had seen, he expatiated upon it

[1] Benjamin Constant. [2] Matthieu de Montmorency.

to Napoleon when he rejoined him in Germany, but was interrupted by his saying, petulantly, "They could not have paid more honor to a widow of a marshal of France, who had lost her husband on the field of battle."

Bernadotte, who was also in Germany at the time, wrote to her.

MARSHAL BERNADOTTE TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

A sprain of my right hand at first prevented me from replying to your letter. I had scarcely the use of it again, when operations recommenced, and I was struck in the head by a ball, which kept me in bed for a month.

I am far from meriting your reproaches, as General Junot can testify. On the eve of the battle of Austerlitz,[1] I heard through him of the beginning of your troubles. I left him at eleven o'clock at night, with the assurance that I was going to write to you on my return to my tent; and he gave me a thousand messages. My head and heart were full of your situation, and I portrayed to you all the concern I felt at your reverse of fortune. While I was writing and thinking of you, the thought struck me, that, at the dawn of day, I was to aid in deciding the fate of the world. My letter was sent to the post, and ought to have reached you. When friendship, tenderness, and sensibility excite a loving heart, it feels deeply all that it expresses. Since then, I have not ceased to give you my prayers and best wishes; but, though destined to love you ever, I dared not run the risk of tiring you with my letters. Adieu! if you still think of me, believe that you are my chief thought, and that nothing equals the sweet and tender friendship I cherish for you. BERNADOTTE.

[1] The marshal was mistaken. It was Auerstadt he meant.

CHAPTER IV.

1807–1811.

Death of Mme. Bernard. — Visit to Coppet. — Prince Augustus of Prussia. — Second visit to Coppet. — The Chateau de Chaumont-sur-Loire. — Sojourn at Fossé. — Return to Paris. — Letter from M. de Montmorency. — Suppression of Mme. de Staël's "Germany." — Letter from Mme. de Staël. — Letter from the Prince Royal of Sweden.

THE loss of fortune was not the only or the most painful trial that Mme. Récamier was called upon to bear within a few months. For nearly a year, Mme. Bernard had been the victim of a painful disease, which required incessant care, and, above all, absolute quiet of mind. Mme. Récamier idolized her mother, from whom she had never been separated since her childhood; but, though she watched her closely, her very affection blinded her to Mme. Bernard's critical situation. The latter, also, with singular strength of mind, did her best to encourage hopes which she herself probably no longer cherished. Every day she was becomingly dressed, and carried from her bed to a couch, where she received for a few hours a certain number of visits. M. Récamier's ruin was her death-blow. She sank beneath it the 20th of January, 1807.

M. DE MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Thursday, Jan. 22, 1807.

My first movement yesterday was to go to you, but I did not dare insist at the door. I respected your grief's need of solitude. I know how deep it has been, and I feel how natural it is. You know I share it, and sympathize with you from the bottom of my heart. But do not reject a consolation worthy of you, one of those consolations which are permanent; I mean the touching example of piety which she whom you mourn has given to us, and which permits us to have so much hope in her happiness. Be sure that on this occasion you have my true and deep sympathy. I shall come again this evening to try

and express it to you, if you will receive me, and if I am not too hoarse to be able to speak.

It will do me much good to hear from you.

She also received these words of sympathy from Mme. de Staël: —

Jan. 24.

Dear Friend, — How much I feel for your grief! How much I suffer from not seeing you! Is it not possible then to see you, and must my life pass thus? I know of nothing to say. I embrace you, and weep with you.

Mme. Recamier passed the first six months after the death of her mother in profound seclusion; but, as her health was affected by her grief, she consented to go to Coppet in the middle of the summer, where she was enthusiastically received by Mme. de Staël.

Geneva had at that time an illustrious guest, Prince Augustus of Prussia, nephew of Frederick the Great, who had been taken prisoner at the battle of Saalfeld, Oct. 6, 1806, where his eldest brother Louis was killed. His youth (he was then only twenty-four years old), his handsome face, and fine figure, the misfortunes of his house and country, and the heroic death of his brother, by whose side he had valiantly fought, threw around him a halo of interest and respect.

Presented to Mme. de Staël, the prince gratefully accepted her offer of hospitality, and very soon fell passionately in love with Mme. Récamier. A Protestant, and a native of a country where divorce is authorized both by the civil and religious law, he flattered himself that she would consent to break the tie which was an obstacle to his wishes, and proposed to her to marry him. Three months passed away in the enchantments of a passion by which Mme. Récamier was deeply touched, if she did not share it. Every thing conspired to favor the prince. The imagination of Mme. de Staël, easily seduced by any thing poetic and singular, made her his eloquent advocate. The place itself, those beautiful shores of Lake Geneva, peopled with romantic phantoms, had a tendency to seduce the judgment. Mme. Récamier was moved, shaken: she welcomed, for a time, the proposal of marriage, — a signal proof, not

only of the passion, but of the esteem of a prince who came of a royal house deeply impressed with its prerogatives, and the greatness of its rank. Vows were exchanged. The tie which had united Juliette to M. Récamier was one that the Catholic Church herself pronounces void. Yielding to the sentiments with which she had inspired the prince, Mme. Récamier wrote to her husband, requesting the dissolution of their union. He replied, that he would consent, if such was her wish; but made an appeal to her noble heart. He recalled the affection he had borne her from her childhood, and even expressed regret at having respected susceptibilities and repugnances, the bar to that closer union which would have made all thoughts of separation impossible. Finally, he demanded, that, should Mme. Récamier persist in such a project, the divorce should not take place in Paris, but somewhere out of France, where he would go to arrange the affair with her. This dignified, paternal, and tender letter made a great impression on Mme. Récamier. She pictured to herself this indulgent companion of her early life, — who, if he had not succeeded in making her happy, had always at least respected her feelings and her freedom, — old and stripped of the great fortune which he had delighted in having her enjoy; and the idea of abandoning the unfortunate man appeared impossible to her. She returned to Paris, at the end of autumn, with her mind made up, but without informing Prince Augustus frankly of the futility of his hopes, relying upon time and absence to soften his disappointment.

Upon his return to Berlin, the prince found his country occupied by the French army; but, whilst he deeply felt the public misfortunes, he was not diverted from his passion. Letters, regular and frequent, reminded the beautiful Frenchwoman of her vows, and painted, in a language touching from its perfect sincerity, the ardent love which obstacles had only inflamed.

A short time after her return to Paris, Mme. Récamier sent him her portrait. He wrote to her, April 24, 1808: —

I hope that you have already received my letter No. 31, wherein I could but feebly express the happiness that your last letter gave me; but still it will give you some idea of

my sensations at receiving it, and getting your portrait. I looked for hours on the enchanting picture, dreaming of a happiness that must surpass all the most delicious dreams of the imagination. What fate could be comparable to that of the man whom you will love?

You will have seen from my last letter that I am impatiently expecting your answer, which will determine my departure for Aix-la-Chapelle. I cannot sufficiently congratulate myself upon the flattering reception I have met with from my relative,[1] his wife,[2] and all the friends I have found here. I have seen my sister[3] for the first time in nearly two years. Our meeting brought back many sad recollections. Domestic trials are now added to the grief we feel for our national misfortunes. My sister has just lost a lovely daughter. My love and sympathy have been some little consolation to her. She is one of the most amiable of women, and I am very sure that she will know how to appreciate you as much as you deserve to be. Adieu, dear Juliette. The hope of seeing you again very soon renders me supremely happy. I beg of vou to reply to me promptly. AUGUSTUS.

It was difficult, and not very prudent, for a Prussian prince to keep up a correspondence with a woman, the object of active surveillance, by a police ready to take offence. The prince only spoke of the King of Prussia as "my cousin," of the queen as "my cousin's wife," the Prussian government as "our house." In a letter announcing the appointment of Count de Hardenberg as Prime Minister, he says, "We have just made some advantageous changes in our house: we have secured a very good head-clerk; but the good results expected from this are still distant."

But, while the prince flattered himself from week to week, that he would be able either to trust himself on French soil, or persuade Mme. Récamier to come within the German dominions, obstacle succeeded obstacle. First, it was the King of Prussia who claimed his active co-operation in military affairs; then the king was at Erfurt, and the prince could not leave during his absence; the king also was opposed to a prince of his house setting foot on French territory, where he ran the risk of being treated

[1] King of Prussia [2] Queen Louise. [3] Princess Radziwill.

as a prisoner. Whilst tortured thus by his perplexities, he fell ill of the small-pox, which put his life in danger.

Mme. Récamier, on her side, now that she had returned to her family, weighed with more coolness and judgment all the advantages and disadvantages of the future offered to her. Though she felt very grateful to Prince Augustus, and fully appreciated his loyalty and devotion, she was convinced, on examining her own heart, that she could respond but imperfectly to the warmth of his feelings; and her delicacy was troubled at the idea of accepting so great a sacrifice from a man to whom she could not render an equal return of affection. The religious scruples which the prince's arguments had not totally silenced, even when supported by his presence, were strengthened by reflection: she feared, too, the scandal of a divorce; and the thought of quitting her country was no less a subject of dread to her.

She therefore wrote a letter to the prince, designed to deprive him of all hope. "Your letter was like a thunderbolt to me," he replied. But he did not accept this decision: at least, he insisted upon the right of seeing her once more.

Several years passed away thus, when, in 1811, the prince finally obtained from Mme. Récamier a promise to meet him in the autumn, at Schaffhausen. But events stronger than man's will prevented the interview. Mme. Récamier was exiled on her arrival at Coppet. The prince, who had waited for her in vain, was profoundly hurt at what he considered a breach of faith. He had gone to Switzerland without the authority of the king, and in his indignation he wrote to Mme. de Staël, "At last I hope I am cured of a foolish passion that I have cherished for four years;" but, being very soon informed of the persecution to which Mme. Récamier was subjected, he hastened to write to her:—

BERNE, Sept. 26, 1811.

I have heard through M. Schlegel that you have been exiled forty leagues from Paris, and I am much concerned at the sorrow you must feel in being separated from almost all your friends. If I could follow my own inclinations, I would fly to you, and try to soften your grief by sharing it. But you know

that a duty, which now seems more difficult than ever to fulfil, unfortunately keeps me far from you. After four years of absence, I hoped at last to see you again, and this exile seemed to furnish you with a pretext for coming to Switzerland; but you have cruelly disappointed me. What I cannot comprehend is, that, not being able or not wishing to see me, you did not condescend to tell me so, and spare me a useless journey of three hundred leagues. I leave to-morrow for the mountains of Oberland and the Petits Cantons. The wild nature of these countries will be in harmony with my sad thoughts, of which you are the sole object. If at last you deign to reply to my letters, please direct to the city where I usually live, and to which I expect soon to return.

Prince Augustus did not cease to correspond with Mme. Récamier, until he saw her again in 1815, when Paris was occupied by the allies. He was then in command of the Prussian Artillery; and, before he reached the city, he besieged successively Maubeuge, Landrécies, Philippeville, Givet, and Longevy. From each one of these places, he did not fail to write to Mme. Récamier notes filled with love and Prussian patriotism.

From the trenches near Maubeuge, he writes to her, July 8, 1815:—

"I command both the Prussian corps and the allied German troops that have the charge of besieging and blockading the nine fortresses between the Meuse and the Sambre. To-night I open the trenches around Maubeuge, and in eighteen days I shall subdue it, even supposing the defence obstinate. The desire of seeing you again will be a very powerful motive with me for pushing on the siege."

Mme. Récamier was intensely patriotic, and all her friendship for her faithful and generous lover was not sufficient to make her forgive the incredible gallantry with which he put at her feet the French fortresses, that, in spite of a truce, had been seized by a foreign power.

Prince Augustus saw Mme. Récamier at Aix-la-Chapelle, and afterward in Paris in 1818. His last journey to France was in 1825, where he visited her in her retreat at the Abbaye-aux-Bois. It was in 1818 that he commissioned Gérard to paint the picture of Corinne, which he presented to Mme. Récamier "as an immortal souvenir

of the passion with which she had inspired him, and of the glorious friendship which united Corinne and Juliette.' In exchange for this picture, Mme. Récamier had sent him her portrait painted by Gérard. The prince had it hung in the gallery of his palace at Berlin, and only parted with it at his death. In accordance with his last wishes, it was sent back to Mme. Récamier in 1845; and in the letter that the prince, in full health, wrote to her, three months before his death, are found, as though he were moved by some presentiment, these touching words, "The ring that you gave me, I will carry to the tomb."

The Emperor Napoleon, who had known, through the police, of the matrimonial projects of the prince with Mme. Récamier, thus referred to them at Saint Helena: —

"In the conversations of the day, the emperor again alluded to Mme. de Staël, of whom, however, he said nothing new, except mentioning some letters seen by the police, and which related to Mme. Récamier and a Prussian prince. The prince, in spite of his rank, had conceived the idea of espousing the friend of Mme. de Staël, and confided it to the latter, whose poetical imagination readily seized upon a plan that would give to Coppet so romantic a reputation. Though the young prince was recalled to Berlin, absence made no change in his feelings, and he still ardently prosecuted his suit. But, whether through her Catholic prejudices against divorce, or through her natural generosity, Mme. Récamier constantly declined this unlooked-for elevation."

The years 1808 and 1809, Mme. Récamier passed between Paris, Coppet, and Angervilliers. Mme. de Staël was then writing her work on Germany, and did not leave Coppet for two years. She had a very decided taste for the theatre and for dramatic representations; and, as a relaxation from literary toil, played both tragedy and comedy with all her usual ardor and enthusiasm. Phèdre was performed at Coppet in the autumn of 1809. Mme. de Staël took the principal character; and Mme. Récamier played the part of Aricie, though she was excessively timid, only consenting to act out of deference to the wishes of her friend. The antique costume, white tunic and peplum, the bandeau of gold and of pearls, were marvel-

lously becoming to her face and figure; but she owed her success in her rôle wholly to her beauty. She herself only remembered her sufferings on that occasion.

The following summer, Mme. de Staël came as near to Paris as her forty leagues would allow, in order to superintend the printing of her three volumes on Germany. She took up her abode in the old chateau of Chaumont-sur-Loire, near Blois, which the Cardinal d'Amboise, Diana de Poictiers, Catherine de Médicis, and Nostradamus had inhabited. From this place she wrote to her friend: —

MME. DE STAËL TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Dear Juliette, — My heart beats with pleasure at the thought of seeing you. Arrange so as to give me as much time as you can; for I shall remain here three months, and I have enough to talk to you about for three years. Invite any of your friends or mine who do not dread solitude. I wish that M. Lemontey would come here accidentally: I would give him my book to read. Will not Talma be able to give me a few days? I want you to like it here; but, if I have again what made me so happy at Coppet, I hope that you will not find it tiresome. Will you say to M. Adrien,[1] that I dare flatter myself with the hope of seeing him, and I beg that you and Matthieu will add your persuasions to mine. You must come to Écure (Department de Loir-et-Cher), three leagues beyond Blois, which place is also my address for letters. There you will find a small boat to bring you to the chateau of Catherine de Médicis, who did a great deal more harm in the world than you. Let me know at what time I must send for you. You must allow sixteen or seventeen hours for the journey as far as there. It would perhaps be better and less fatiguing to sleep at Orleans, and arrive here in time for dinner.

After Mme. Récamier's return from the baths of Aix, in Savoy, she joined her friend in this picturesque habitation, belonging to M. Leray, who was then in America. But while Mme. de Staël, her family, and friends occupied it, the owner returned, and the brilliant colony was obliged to accept the hospitality proffered them by M. de Salaberry.

In the "Ten Years of Exile," we find this account of

[1] Adrien de Montmorency.

the last re-union of Mme. de Staël and her friends on French soil: —

"Unable to remain longer in the chateau of Chaumont, whose owners had returned from America, I established myself at an estate called Fossé, lent to me by a generous friend. The house belonged to a Vendean soldier, who did not take very good care of it, but whose good nature smoothed away difficulties, while he himself was amusing through his originality. We had scarcely arrived, when an Italian musician, who gave lessons to my daughter, began to play upon the guitar; whilst my daughter accompanied on the harp the sweet voice of my beautiful friend, Mme. Récamier. The music brought the peasants under our windows: they were astonished at seeing this colony of troubadours who had come to enliven their master's solitude. Here were passed, in company with some dear friends whom I shall never forget, my last days in France. The re-union of such intimate friends, the retired life we led, our refined pleasures, did nobody any harm.

"We frequently sang a charming air, composed by the Queen of Holland, of which the refrain is —

'Fais ce que dois, advienne que pourra.' [1]

"After dinner, we assembled around a table covered with a green cloth, and wrote, instead of talking, to each other. We were so much interested in these novel tête-à-têtes that we were impatient to leave the dinner table, where we talked, to go and write. When any strangers happened to be present, we were not willing to put aside our usual occupations, and the penny-post, as we called it, always went its round.

"One day, a gentleman of the neighborhood, who had never had a thought in his life beyond the chase, called to take my boys with him into his woods. He remained some time seated at our busy, but silent table. In order that the big sportsman might feel more at his ease in the circle into which he had dropped, Mme. Récamier wrote him with her pretty hand a little note, which he excused himself from receiving by saying, that he could not read writing by candle-light. We laughed a little at this check to the benevolent coquetry of our beautiful friend, and thought that a note from her hand would not always have met with the same fate. Thus passed our life without any of us — if I may judge from myself — finding time a burden."

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[1] "Do what is right, happen what may."

Among the few notes of this penny-post that have been preserved, I have found these lines from Mme. de Staël to Mme. Récamier: —

Dear Juliette, — Our stay here is drawing to a close. I cannot conceive of either country or home life without you. I know that certain sentiments seem to be more necessary to me; but I also know that every thing falls to pieces when you leave. You were the sweet and tranquil centre of our home here, and nothing is left to bind us together. God grant that we may live this summer over again!

After these happy weeks passed at Fossé with Mme. de Staël, Adrien and Matthieu de Montmorency, Count Eleazer de Sabran, M. de Barante, Count de Balk, and Benjamin Constant, Mme. Récamier returned to Paris, where she used all influence to secure the signature of the censors to the third volume of "Germany."

M. DE MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Fossé, near Blois, Oct. 2, 1810.

I cannot deny myself the pleasure of writing you, at least, a few lines, dear and perfect friend. My first thought, which I have shared in common with all your friends here, has been solely about your health, to which, in your perfect devotion, you have paid little attention, and of those sufferings on the road from Angervilliers to Paris, about which I have been much concerned. I hope that they have been followed by no bad consequences, and that you are now entirely recovered. But our friend has just received, by Albert, your letter, so perfect, affectionate, and circumstantial. It is not necessary to dwell upon all the feelings it has excited: the prevailing one with me is admiration of the great generosity and devotion of your nature. She has been very much moved by it, and will surely express her feelings to you by the return of her son. I wanted to take his place, and join you; but she insists upon keeping me two days longer: at the latest, therefore, it will be Saturday before I see you. Until then, I am yours. I trust these kind acts of yours will not prevent you from lifting up your heart to God; but, on the contrary, lead you to the source of what is good and noble. Adieu, *aimable amie.*

Mme. Récamier's exertions in behalf of her friend were of no avail. The edition of "Germany" was wholly destroyed by the order of the police; and Mme. de Staël was enjoined to return immediately to Coppet.

MME. DE STAËL TO MME. RECAMIER.

Dear Friend, — I have fallen into a state of frightful melancholy. I am wholly overcome at the thought of my departure; and, for the first time, I have felt all the grief of my situation. I counted also upon the profits of my book to maintain me, and now here are six years of labor, study, and travel nearly lost. Do you comprehend all the strangeness of this? It is the first two volumes, which had already received the signature of the censors, that have been seized; and M. Portalis knows, no more than I, what all this means. So I am sent away forty leagues, because I have written a book which has been approved by the emperor's censors. This is not all. I could have printed my book in Germany. I came, voluntarily, to submit it to the censorship, thinking, that, if it came to the worst, they would only prohibit the work. But can people be punished who come voluntarily to submit to their judges? Dear friend, there is Matthieu, the friend of twenty years' standing, the most perfect being that I know, and him I must leave. You, too, dear angel, who have loved me for my misfortunes, and have only known me during the period of my adversity, you who render life so sweet, — you I must also leave. Ah! *mon Dieu!* I am the Orestes of exile, and the victim of fatality. But God's will must be done, and I trust that he will sustain me. For the last time, I am listening to that music of Pertozza that recalls your sweet face, those attractions you possess apart from your beauty, and so many of the pure and serene pleasures of this summer. One more embrace between us, and then the unknown future begins. Forgive me, dear friend, for writing so desponding a letter. I will take courage; but to reconcile one's self to such a living death is a horrible struggle. I have such a cloud of sorrow around me, that I know not what I write. If I pass the winter in Switzerland, as I hope to do, dear friend . . . I dare not conclude. I should be tempted to say to you, as M. Dubreuil to Pechméja, "My friend, thou only art wanting here."

While Mme. Récamier was with Mme. de Staël, Marshal Bernadotte, Prince de Ponte Corvo, who had been adopted by Charles XIII. as his son, was unanimously elected hereditary prince by the Swedish Diet, Aug. 10, 1810. He set out for Sweden the 2d of October, and from Stockholm wrote the following letter to Mme. Récamier: —

STOCKHOLM, Dec. 22, 1810.

MADAME, — On leaving France for ever, I was filled with regret, that, on account of your absence from Paris, I was deprived of the pleasure of receiving your commands, and saying good-bye. You were engaged in consoling a friend for an approaching and, no doubt, life-long separation; and I felt obliged to postpone writing to you until another time. M. de Czernicheff has kindly promised to give you my respects. We have long talks about you, your estimable qualities, and the tender interest you inspire in all who approach you. Receive, I beg of you, the assurance of my affection, which can never be chilled, either by time or the cold of the North.

CHARLES JEAN.

CHAPTER V.

1811–1813.

Mme. Récamier visits Coppet. — Exile of M. de Montmorency. — Exile of Mme. Récamier. — Sojourn at Châlons-sur-Marne. — Leaves for Lyons. — The Duchess de Chevreuse. — The Duchess de Luynes. — Lyonnese Society. — Mme. de Sermésy. — Camille Jordan. — M. Ballanche. — Letter of M. Ballanche. — Letter of M. de Montmorency. — Departure of Mme. de Staël for Russia. — Mme. Récamier treated coldly as an exile. — Anecdote of Talma and the Bishop of Troyes. — Leaves Lyons for Italy. — Arrives in Rome. — Torlonia. — Letters from the Duchess de Luynes.

SINCE the seizure and destruction of ten thousand copies of "Germany," Mme. de Staël had been at Coppet, a prey to cruel anxieties. Having decided to seek an asylum in Sweden, where her children had relatives on their father's side, she was heart-broken at the idea of abandoning France. Mme. Récamier was, therefore, anxious to see her before her departure; and, in order not to excite the attentions of the police, who at that time exercised an active and close surveillance over persons suspected of the least opposition to the Government, she gave out, in the spring of 1811, that she was going to the waters of Aix, in Savoy, from which she had received so much benefit the previous summer, and took a passport for that city. But the object of her trip could be easily divined, and she received no lack of warnings from her friends. Esménard, the Chief of the third division of the General Police, who professed for Mme. Récamier a very great admiration, made strenuous efforts to dissuade her from an imprudence that would do her friend no good, and bring the most deplorable consequences upon herself. To these timid counsels Mme. Récamier replied, that the visit of a harmless woman to an unhappy friend, on the eve of

departing from France, was so natural and innocent a step, that it was impossible to believe that the Government could take offence at it; but, whatever might be the consequences, she was resolved not to refuse to a persecuted woman this mark of respect and affection. Mme. Récamier left for Coppet on the 23d of August, 1811. M. de Montmorency had gone before her into Switzerland. The following account of these two visits is from the "Ten Years of Exile:"—

"M. de Montmorency passed several days with me at Coppet; and, by the return of the courier who had announced at Paris his arrival there, he received his order of exile. The emperor would not have been satisfied, if this order had not reached him at my house, and if it had not signified that I was the cause of his exile. Such was the petty malice of the master of so great an empire. When I learned the misfortune I had brought upon my generous friend, I uttered cries of grief. M. de Montmorency, calm and Christian, tried to make me equally so; but he had the consciousness of self-sacrifice to sustain him, while I reproached myself with the cruel consequences of this devotion that separated him from his family and friends.

"While I was in this state, I received a letter from Mme. Récamier, that beautiful woman who had received the worship of the whole of Europe, and who never abandoned an unhappy friend. She announced to me that she was going to the springs of Aix, in Savoy, and that she intended to stop at my house, and would be with me in two days. I trembled lest M. de Montmorency's fate should also be hers; for, however improbable, I felt that I had every thing to fear from hate so barbarous and petty. I therefore sent a messenger to meet Mme. Récamier, and to beseech her not to come to Coppet. But it was hard to know that she who had constantly consoled me by her kind attentions was only a few leagues off, so near me; and that it was not permitted me to see her again, perhaps for the last time! I had begged her not to stop at Coppet, but she would not listen to me: she could not pass under my windows without remaining a few hours with me; and it was with convulsions of tears that I saw her enter the house, where heretofore her arrival had always been welcomed with joy. She left the next day, and repaired to the residence of a relative, fifty leagues from Switzerland. But it was all in vain: the fatal stroke of exile smote her also. The loss of fortune that she had suffered made the breaking-up of her own

home very painful to her. Separated from all her friends, she passed whole months in a provincial town, a victim to the saddest and most monotonous solitude. Such was the fate which I had brought upon the most brilliant woman of her day."

Though Mme. Récamier, after thirty-six hours at Coppet, really did go to her cousin's, the Baroness de Dalmassy's, she did not stop there, but hastened on to Paris. She was still ignorant that M. Récamier had been notified of the order of exile on the 3d of September; but, with the painful prospect before her of separation from her family and friends, she felt the necessity of arranging all her affairs. She wished to see her father again, if she were to be parted from him for a long time; and she also desired to consult with her friends upon a choice of residence.

Upon arriving at Dijon, she was met by M. Récamier, who informed her that she was exiled forty leagues from Paris; but she continued her journey, and passed several days with her family in strict incognito. After some hesitation, she decided to reside at Châlons-sur-Marne, and left for this place of banishment, in company with a little niece of M. Récamier, whom she had adopted a few weeks before.

Châlons was certainly a very dull residence; but the place offered some advantages. It was precisely forty leagues from Paris, and was governed by a prefect, who was kind, intelligent, and honorable. Châlons was also twelve leagues from the Château de Montmirail, the magnificent estate of the La Rochefoucaulds de Doudeauville. The Duchess, and especially the Duke de Doudeauville, were among Mme. Récamier's intimate friends. Their son, Sosthènes de La Rochefoucauld, who had married the only daughter of Matthieu de Montmorency, was, like all his family, deeply attached to her. Still Mme. Récamier did not see much of these friends, as it would have been neither prudent nor wise for those among them who had not incurred the emperor's displeasure to keep up too frequent an intercourse with an exile. As for M. de Montmorency, it was three months before he dared to ask permission to leave Montmirail to pass a few days with his friend.

Mme. de Catellan was the first of her friends who came to see her from Paris. In the first impulse of compassion, she quitted her daughter and the capital, out of which she did not know how to exist, and passed several weeks at Châlons. Mme. Récamier's father also came to see her there; then M. Récamier and M. Simonard. Her cousin, Mme. de Dalmassy, shared her retirement for a week, and Augustus de Staël brought her news of his mother. But it was not of a nature to relieve the anxiety Mme. de Staël's friends felt on her account. Her spirits were low, and her powerful imagination only served to give more intensity to the pain of her own exile, and to the thought of the persecution she had drawn upon her friends.

To relieve the monotony of her life in a small town where there were no society and no public entertainments of any sort, Mme. Récamier made the acquaintance of the organist of the parish, and went every Sunday to play the organ at high mass. The consequences of exile weighed heavily upon her, condemned to isolation and a hotel life, with a narrow fortune that made all change inconvenient and onerous. Still she resolved never to solicit her recall, and requested those of her friends who, like Junot, approached the emperor familiarly, never to mention her name even, in his presence.

Though the greater number of public functionaries kept aloof from the exile, there were some, and among them Junot, who remained faithful in adversity; and their fidelity did them no harm.

After eight months passed thus painfully at Châlons, Mme. Récamier was persuaded by Mme. de Staël to go to Lyons. She wrote to her:—

"At present, I am extremely anxious that you should go to Lyons. If I take passage on the frigate, I can have another heart-break in this opportunity of embracing you again. You will be on the road to Italy, and you will have some diversions that are not to be despised; for they are good for the nerves. Alas! generous friend, I know by experience what you suffer: you can, therefore, trust me in regard to the compensations of such a situation. The prefect of Lyons is quite a gentleman, and quite kind: I entreat you, therefore, to go to Lyons. Do not allow any little family obstacles to stand in the way.

You are without relations as you are without an equal. Leave a spot where every thing is noticed, because there is nobody there."

Without hoping to find any great alleviation of her position, Mme. Récamier decided to leave Châlons in June, 1812.

A residence in Lyons really offered her more resources than any other city. Her husband's family was large and respected there, and they all received her with the utmost cordiality. At the hotel where she resided, she found also a sister exile, the elegant Duchess de Chevreuse.

A victim to the precautions that the preservation of a great fortune imposed upon her husband's family, the duchess had been constrained to accept the position of lady of honor to the empress. Her father-in-law, the Duke de Luynes, had for the same reasons allowed himself to be made senator. But the brilliant duchess, in appearing against her will at the new court, brought with her all the disdain and haughtiness of the old régime. Her appearance was more elegant and fascinating than regularly beautiful. Her figure was very fine, and she was endowed with the power of pleasing to a remarkable extent. The emperor, it is said, was not insensible to her charms; but she received his advances with the utmost pride and coldness. After the arrest of the royal family of Spain and their arrival at Fontainebleau, Napoleon wished to attach the duchess to the service of the Spanish queen; but, upon hearing for what post she was destined, she replied that she would willingly be a prisoner, but that she never would be a jailor. This proud reply sent her into exile.

When Mme. Récamier met her at Lyons, this exile had already lasted nearly four years; and the victim of so prolonged a persecution had successively dragged through Normandy, Dauphiny, and Touraine the weight of a misfortune that was killing her. It seemed indeed more easy for her to renounce life than Paris. To people who only saw Mme. de Chevreuse casually, this malady, that did not impair her beauty, seemed more the result of ennui than of disease, but her physicians had but little hopes of her

recovery. The duchess was accompanied by her mother-in-law, the Duchess de Luynes, between whom and Mme. Récamier soon sprang up a warm friendship.

The Duchess de Luynes, mother-in-law of Matthieu de Montmorency, was a very original and perfectly natural person. Her hard, irregular features and her voice were masculine. When she dressed in female attire (which did not happen every day), she adopted a most peculiar kind of costume, wearing a high cap, and very ample gown, with two pockets. She was never seen in a bonnet. Mme. de Luynes herself made fun of what she called her awkwardness (*dégaine*); but, in spite of her face, coarse voice, and toilette, it was impossible at the end of five minutes not to recognize in her the noble lady.

The duchess was a great reader, very well informed, and understood English perfectly. She had established a printing press at the chateau of Dampierre, and not only set type herself, but had the reputation of being a skilful compositor.[1] She went one day with Mme. Récamier to the printing establishment of Messrs. Ballanche & Son. After carefully examining the type, presses, and machinery, she suddenly tucked up her dress, placed herself before a case, and, to the admiration of all the workmen, composed a page very correctly and quickly, without omitting even a certain swaying of the body usual among the printers of her time.

Lyons is, *par excellence*, the city of charity; but this great centre of industry and commerce has not always boasted of society so intellectual and distinguished as that which grouped itself, in 1812, around Mme. de Sermésy, a niece of M. Simonard. This lady gave Mme. Récamier a cordial welcome; and it was in her salon that that constellation of men of whom Lyons was so proud were accustomed to meet. Among them were Dugas-Montbel (the translator of Homer), Artaud, Ballanche, Camille Jordan, and many others whose names I have forgotten.

Camille Jordan, who had known Mme. Récamier from her youth, was a very brilliant person, his childlike can-

1 The books printed by the Duchess de Luynes are still sought after by bibliopoles.

dor, enthusiasm, grace, and vivacity giving a peculiar charm to his conversation. Violently thrust out of politics by the measure of the 18th Fructidor,[1] he had occupied his leisure in translating "The Messiah" of Klopstock, which he left unfinished. At the Restoration, he returned to public life, and took rank among our most distinguished orators.

It was Camille Jordan who introduced M. Ballanche[2] to Mme. Récamier. Upon her arrival in Lyons, he talked to her about Ballanche with his usual enthusiasm, asked permission to present him, and read to her the portion of the "Fragments" already published. He also told her, that Ballanche had been in love with a young lady of noble birth and without fortune, whose family had become embarrassed by a long and ruinous litigation; that Ballanche, with the intention of restoring the family to peace and prosperity, had made very generous offers to the other party in the suit, to induce him to give up his pretended rights; and that, kindly received by the father, he had aspired to the hand of the daughter: and how his hopes had been deceived. The despair of this repulsed love found expression in those beautiful and harmonious pages, which he styled "Fragments."

M. Ballanche's ugliness was the result of an accident. In order to get relief from severe headaches, he had consulted a charlatan, whose violent treatment brought on a caries of the jaw-bone; he was therefore obliged to submit to a surgical operation, the consequence of which was a deformity in one of his cheeks. But his magnificent eyes, high forehead, sweet and, at times, inspired expression, compensated for this unfortunate ugliness, and made it impossible for any one, in spite of his awkwardness and timidity, to be blind to the fact, that this disagreeable exterior was the seat of a fine and noble intellect. David d'Angers, inspired by his physiognomy, and justly seizing upon the grandeur of the head, made of M. Ballanche (in profile) a very beautiful and striking medallion.

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1 Twelfth month of the calendar of the First French Republic.

2 Ballanche, a profound and Christian philosopher, Member of the French Academy and the Academy of Lyons, one of the most eminent and most classical prose writers of this century.

The day after he was presented to Mme. Récamier, by whom he was instantly fascinated and enchained, he called alone, and found himself tête-à-tête with her. She was at work on a piece of embroidery, and the conversation, that languished at first, soon became interesting; for, though M. Ballanche had no chit-chat, he talked extremely well when the conversation was upon philosophic and ethical, literary or political subjects. Unfortunately, M. Ballanche's shoes had a frightful odor, that, disagreeable at first to Mme. Récamier, ended in making her wholly uncomfortable. Overcoming her embarrassment at speaking to him about this prosaic annoyance, she timidly confessed to him that the smell of his shoes made her ill.

M. Ballanche humbly excused himself, said he was sorry that she had not informed him of it sooner, and went out. At the end of two minutes, he returned without his shoes, resumed his place, and continued the conversation. Several persons coming in, and finding him in this state, asked what had happened to him. "The smell of my shoes," he he replied, "annoyed Mme. Récamier, and so I left them in the ante-room."

I insert here a letter from M. Ballanche to Mme. Récamier, written a few months later, on the evening of the day she left for Italy. It will explain, better than I can, the relations that existed between them: —

M. BALLANCHE TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

February, 1813.

MADAME, — I do not know that you were aware how agreeable to me was the promise you exacted from me, to write to you the very evening of the day you left. You felt how painful your absence would be to me, after the sweet habit of seeing you daily, which you had so kindly allowed me to contract; and you wished to soften my pain as much as you could. You are indeed the most excellent of women. I must confess, madame, that your goodness to me has often been a matter of surprise. I had no reason to expect it; for I know how silent, sullen, and sad I am. It must be your infinite tact that has made you quickly comprehend all the good that you could do to me. You are the personification of indulgence and pity:

you have seen in me an exile from happiness, and have had compassion upon me.

A little natural timidity makes me reserved in my conversation. I can write what I could not speak.

Allow me to entertain for you the feelings of a brother for a sister. I long for the time when I shall be able to offer you, along with these fraternal sentiments, all the humble homage in my power. My devotion will be entire and without reserve. I would sacrifice my own happiness to yours. There is justice in this; for you are of much more value than I.

I shall give every evening some moments to Antigone. I shall try to make her resemble you a little. It will be a means of diverting my thoughts from those evenings which I have been accustomed to pass with you, without separating me from you, which would not be possible. You will also permit me to write to you. It is very late. You would send me away, if I were with you. You would wish to retire. May God give you tranquil slumbers!

In another letter, speaking of Mme. Récamier's need of loving, M. Ballanche writes: —

"You were originally an Antigone, whom the world has tried by all means to convert into an Armida. It has not succeeded well. One cannot be false to one's own nature."

Mme. Récamier's chief inducement in coming to Lyons was the lively hope of seeing Mme. de Staël. She not only expected to see her again, but flattered herself, that, by being nearer to Switzerland, she might arrange to leave at the same time with her friend. This project, which M. de Montmorency strongly opposed, failed. Mme. de Staël did not come to Lyons, and her son made his appearance there once only. Mme. Recamier's discouragement and sadness increased in proportion as she perceived her reunion with Mme. de Staël becoming impossible. She expressed her feelings to M. de Montmorency, who, in his tender compassion, tried to revive her courage.

M. DE MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

VENDÔME, July 4, 1812.

I have been intending, every day lately, to write you, *aimable amie;* but an excursion in the woods, where I passed part of yesterday, has again prevented me. You must pardon me

for writing to Camille before you: I owed this attention to her on account of the death of her mother-in-law. I was very much touched with the little note you were so kind to write to me, when in a state of suffering of which the writing bore the painful marks. You ask me to pity you. This, coming from your lips, would astonish many people who see the impression you produce in society, and the attentions of all kinds that you receive, as well in the seclusion of a province as in the salons of Paris. But it is not on this account that I do not commiserate you. I find other reasons for congratulating you, and for fortifying you against the temptation to depression, in the closer knowledge I have of your character, — in a certain goodness, a certain generosity, that cannot exist without energy, and which reveal in your nature forces unknown, probably, to yourself; and in the happiness you have enjoyed, in the midst of great and natural obstacles, of communing with the source of true courage and of earthly felicity.

But when you have no power to draw from this source, where all your natural virtues will be strengthened and vitalized; when you can no longer give yourself generously to God, — who, I venture to promise you, will recompense you fourfold, — then, dear friend, I am ready to accord you, not pity, — a word that I dislike to apply thus, — but the tenderest and most profound commiseration. I comprehend, pity, and share what is painful in such a sort of isolation. But friendship has the right to exclaim also against that word isolation: one is not isolated when one has God and friends. Moreover, what surety, help, or reasonable hopes can you derive from any other course? I dare not suspect your heart of being able to separate for a moment the ideas of duty and happiness! We must, therefore, resign ourselves to a position which is the result of circumstances entirely independent of our will; or, more properly, the work of a superior power. Above all, I hope that you may escape your special danger, — the desire of sacrificing yourself to certain unfortunate friends. Certainly, I would be less disposed than any person, situated as I am toward these friends, to dispute their right to receive proofs of your generous friendship; but I entreat you not to exceed certain limits. They cannot doubt your interest: they would be in despair at what might involve or compromise your whole life.

I have met here my two cousins. Adrien has left me, but is going immediately to send his son, whom he has confided to me for a few months. It is an educational responsibility even greater than that of your little Amelia. I keep with me, for a fortnight longer at least, some of my nearest relations. Then

they return to Paris, and I shall wander about the environs for a few weeks, when we shall all join each other again in the woods. Thoughts of you will follow me everywhere. May thoughts of me, but, above all, the most important of all thoughts never abandon you!

A few days after the receipt of this letter, came a few lines from Coppet. The suspense was over! Mme. de Staël had left France.

July 10.

With all the warmth of my heart, I bid you adieu, my guardian angel. I commit Augustus to you. I hope that he will see you, and that I shall see him again. I rely upon you to make his life smoother now, and to re-unite us once more, when such a thing becomes possible. You are an angelic creature. If I could live near you, I should be only too happy. But fate drags me away. Adieu.[1]

It will be remembered, that, when Mme. de Staël urged her friend to leave Châlons, she enumerated among the advantages of Lyons the society of the Prefect, whom she described as a gentleman. But though this person, as well as his wife, had been received by Mme. Récamier at her house in Paris, he was one of those functionaries who avoided the exile. Only one visit was exchanged between them; and the Prefect, in his official zeal, took advantage of the last to proffer Mme. Récamier some uncalled-for advice, that she might have designated by another name. Almost at the same time, another similar, though less serious, annoyance occurred. Mme. Récamier had only been a few weeks in Lyons, when M. Eugène (since Duke) d'Harcourt, a very agreeable and independent man, passing through the city, stopped there a few days to testify his respect and sympathy for her. He and Mme. Delphine (M. Récamier's sister) were present when she received a visit from a Lyonnese, a pretentious and demonstrative person, who made himself both familiar and ridiculous. M. G. de B. had been treated by M. Récamier at Paris

[1] Chateaubriand states that Mme. de Staël's secret marriage with M. de Rocca was the reason she did not come to Lyons, and that Mme. Récamier wrote to her, offering to join her at Coppet; and her only reply was the note announcing her departure. This conduct wounded Mme. Récamier deeply. — Ed.

with that kindness and cordiality which the latter showed to all his fellow-citizens. He had not heard of Mme. Récamier's exile; and, in passing through the Square de Belle-Cour, had just learnt that that celebrated woman was in Lyons, at the Hôtel de l'Europe. Without losing a moment, he went to the hotel; and, after many compliments and strong protestations of gratitude to Mme. Récamier, this importunate individual proceeded to say, that he was to give a *fête-champêtre* the day after the morrow, and begged the beautiful Parisian to do him the favor of coming to it. Mme. Récamier hesitated, urging her health, and the presence of M. d'Harcourt, who had come to Lyons to see her, as an excuse; but all in vain. The pertinacious man would take no refusal, and they did not get rid of him, until he had extracted a promise from the whole party to honor his fête with their presence. Delighted at the eclat the presence of so celebrated a woman, and a nobleman, would give to his party, he proclaimed his good fortune in the city, where he was informed that Mme. Récamier was an exile. His despair knew no bounds, and he decided to receive her in such a manner that her stay would be short.

On the day appointed, Mme. Récamier set out with the two friends included in this unlucky invitation. Upon their arrival, they found the park gate open; and, inquiring for the host and hostess, they were told that they were in the garden, where they at last found M. G. de B., in an arbor, astride on the balustrade of a ring-game of which he was counting the strokes.

When he saw the three guests whose society he had so obstinately solicited, he did not condescend to get down, but gave them a patronizing little nod, and went on marking the points. Such visitors were not in the habit of being thus treated: they exchanged looks of astonishment, went back to their carriage, and returned to Lyons. This adventure, which first offended, ended by amusing them. A few days afterward, this strange conduct was explained by M. G. de B. himself to Mme. Delphine, upon whom he called. His frankness and stupidity were so complete, that he did not even make an apology. This very G. de B., upon the

return of the Bourbons, solicited and obtained the post of reader to the king, Louis XVIII. The ante-chambers of every régime are always crowded with such people.

The frequent stopping of travellers at Lyons furnished another source of amusement to Mme. Récamier. It was owing to this, that she had a visit from the Marquis de Catellan, and also from the Duke d'Abrantes, who, on his way to Illyria, remained some hours at the Hôtel de l'Europe.

In the winter of 1812 to 1813, Talma played at the Grand Théâtre. Mme. Récamier had known the great actor personally through Mme. de Staël, who professed the greatest admiration for him. He had been several times to see her in Paris, and, upon coming to Lyons, called upon her; and she invited him to dinner. The Abbé de Boulogne, Bishop of Troyes, and a celebrated preacher, chanced to come to Mme. Récamier's the very day Talma dined there. Though the bishop had never been to the play in his life, he was familiar with the best dramatic authors, and looked upon this meeting with an eminent tragedian as a piece of good fortune. Talma, kindly and out of respect for him, recited those of his rôles in which religious sentiment was expressed. This he did with all the fire and force of his genius. The abbé was delighted, and naïvely expressed his feelings. Talma, in his turn, humbly begged the favor of an extract from one of his sermons. The bishop consented. After listening with great interest to the orator, Talma praised his delivery, made some remarks upon his gestures, and added, "It is very good as far as here, my lord [pointing below the chest of the preacher]; but the lower part of the body goes for nothing. One can easily see that you have never thought of your legs."

After Mme. de Staël's departure, Mme. Récamier felt more than ever the bitterness of her isolated situation. In vain did Mme. Delphine, appealing to her charitable disposition, associate her in her ministrations to the sick and suffering: the sympathetic heart of Mme. Récamier, easily moved by the sorrows of others, forgot for a moment her own trials, only to feel the weight of them again with overwhelming force. From Ballanche she received the

warmest sympathy. The tenderness and prattle of her little niece Amelia, whom she loved with maternal affection, brought sometimes a smile to that beautiful face where smiles now rarely came. At the close of January, 1813, M. de Montmorency finally came to Lyons. He saw that Mme. Récamier had need of change, and encouraged her idea of going to Italy.

Mme. Récamier left Lyons, with her niece and maid, early in Lent. M. de Montmorency accompanied her as far as Chambéry. She travelled slowly in her own carriage, with hired horses, and took with her a small collection of books, chosen by M. Ballanche, who to the "History of the Crusades" had added "The Genius of Christianity."

The little party arrived comfortably at Turin, where Mme. Récamier accepted for a few days the kind and pleasant family-hospitality of M. Augustus Pasquier.

M. Pasquier, not thinking it prudent that his lovely countrywoman should continue her journey to Rome, accompanied only by a child and maid, insisted upon providing her with a suitable travelling companion. The gentleman was a German and a distinguished botanist. They began their day's journey at half-past six in the morning, stopped for breakfast at eleven or twelve, and started again at three, travelling until night.

After visiting successively Parma, Modena, and Bologna, and stopping ten days at Florence, Mme. Récamier finally arrived at Rome in Holy Week. She first took up her abode at Serni's Piazza di Espagno; but, at the end of a month, she removed to lodgings on the first floor of the Fiano Palace, on the Corso, where her salon became the centre of attraction to the few foreigners in Rome. Rome was at that time bereft of its pontiff, and the capital of the Christian world was only the headquarters of the Department of the Tiber. M. de Tournon was Prefect, M. de Norvins Head of the Police, and General Miollis commanded the French troops. Sorrow for the captivity of the pope was deep and universal among the Roman population. Hatred of the French rule was visible on all occasions, and was shared equally by the aristocracy and the people. On account of the grave events agitating Europe, there

were scarcely any strangers in the city; and its sadness and dulness gave it, perhaps, a more impressive aspect.

Mme. Récamier had letters of credit and introduction to the old Torlonia, who was extremely kind and prompt in offering her his services, and in presenting her to his wife. This Torlonia — a banker in the morning, and Duke de Bracciano at night; who had made princes of his sons, and noble ladies of his daughters — was an extraordinary person. Endowed with a remarkable faculty for business, he was avaricious as a Jew, and sumptuous as the most magnificent grand-seigneur. He had that very year remodelled and refurnished his beautiful palace on the Corso; Canova had executed for him the group of Hercules and Lycas; and yet, at the same time, he was not only guilty of a thousand meannesses, but boasted of them as marks of cleverness.

Mme. Torlonia, Duchess de Bracciano, had been very handsome; and, though no longer young, she still bore the traces of beauty. She was good-natured, and, like the Italian women of the time, a singular mixture of gallantry and devotion. In a confidential moment, she one day related what care she had taken to prevent her husband's peace of mind from being disturbed by her conduct; and added, "Oh! he will be very much surprised at the day of judgment."

Soon after Mme. Récamier's arrival in Rome, she received news from Lyons, which confirmed all her fears for the Duchess de Chevreuse: —

THE DUCHESS DE LUYNES TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

LYONS, June 10, 1813.

How I long to see you, *ma belle*, and talk to you of my troubles! In six weeks, the illness of my poor *charmante* has made most alarming progress. She insisted upon making that unfortunate journey to Grenoble, and we yielded to her wishes. The route, though we rested twice, was very fatiguing for her. We hired there two apartments, where we established ourselves. She met her dear friend there, who was at her command, and showed her every attention. She rose at seven o'clock to see this friend at eight, and stayed up until half-past nine. She was extremely weak; hemorrhages came on, and

we had no resources, neither physician nor apothecary: she wished to leave, and put herself again under the care of M. Socquet.

We returned here the 5th of May. I had the good fortune to find lodgings near our former residence. But my poor invalid suffers more than ever. Nothing pleases her; but we must excuse her, for she is much to be pitied. She coughs up matter, and her hands and feet have begun to swell. She looks upon her condition in the gloomiest light, and I am very unhappy; for I fear she is right. She wished to see my daughter,[1] for whom I have sent. She will be here by the close of next week. She may divert her a little: as for me, I have exhausted all my powers. It gives me pleasure, that all those Lyonnese whom she used to talk against come to see her every day, from eight to nine.

While writing to you, I look from time to time at your little bust,[2] which has followed me, and will follow me, I hope, everywhere. I love it. I cannot say it consoles me for your absence, but it does me good. If I could embrace you, and talk over my trouble, I should be very happy; for you understand so well how to soothe, that I should be consoled by seeing you In the meantime, *ma belle*, I affectionately embrace you.

LYONS, July 3, 1813.

If any consolation were possible under the misfortune that threatens me, it would certainly be the love and interest of so kind a person as you, *ma belle*. Your letter of the 25th, received yesterday, gave me real pleasure. But I must give you the sad particulars of my interesting invalid. Fancy to yourself that brilliant woman enveloped in a veil of . . . I cannot write the word. She is swollen from her feet to her waist. Her hands and arms are in the same condition. She swallows still, but frequently with difficulty; she suffers little pain, and is sensible. Happily for her, she takes no interest in any thing around her. Her brother, who is here, is an object of indifference to her; me she endures, but nothing more. It is a horrible malady that breaks ties which ought almost to continue after death. I am in despair. All day I have a heart-breaking sight before my eyes. I see her growing weaker and weaker. Martin every day pronounces the most

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[1] Mme. Matthieu de Montmorency.
[2] A miniature bust of Mme. Récamier, by Chinard.

disheartening decisions. It is nearly a month since she has been so dangerously ill. The journey to Grenoble killed her. My daughter is a great comfort to me. I can at least talk to her, which is a solace. I am very sorry to say, that I do not know when I shall see you again.

Adieu, *ma belle*. Pity me, and love me as I do you. I embrace you with all my heart.

DAMPIERRE, July 18, 1813.

You will have foreseen, *ma belle*, from the tenor of my last letter from Lyons, the terrible grief that was in store for me. I lost her whom I loved with all my heart and strength, on the 6th of July last. It is not possible to describe my grief. You have seen yourself how lovable she was, how she deserved that I should call her *ma charmante*, how she loved me, how bright and kind she was. How sad to speak only in the past tense of so brilliant a person! I cannot reconcile myself to this idea: it is a solemn fact, which I cannot persuade myself to believe. I see her, I care for her always; and to force myself back to the truth is to suffer.

With your solid and agreeable qualities, how much more you would have appreciated her, if she had not been so ill that it fatigued her too much to see often so distinguished a person as yourself, whom she made an effort to please! She said to me, "I think her charming. I should like to see her often, but I should tire her; I am too ill." What a state, and what a malady, *chère belle!* She was ill during almost all her exile, and the last three years have been the saddest. A few days before she died, she was frightfully changed, wasted away, and haggard. Immediately after death she looked like an angel. Her beauty came back, and she was superb. I remained more than an hour looking at her, and kissing her hands. I was so absorbed, that I never thought of having her modelled, which I very much regret. I have no portrait of her, but one taken when she was a child, which resembles her but slightly. Think of me, and love me as I do you.

CHAPTER VI.

1813–1814.

Canova. — Albano. — The fisherman of Albano. — Mme. Récamier leaves for Naples. — Meets Fouché. — King Joachim and Queen Caroline. — Return to Rome. — The bust by Canova. — Return of Pius VII. to Rome. — Mme. Récamier returns to France. — Note from Mme. de Staël.

ONE of Mme. Récamier's first visits in Rome was to the studio of Canova. She had no special introduction to him; but all strangers were admitted to the *atelier* of the illustrious sculptor. After going through all the rooms where the artist's works, finished or unfinished, were to be seen, and admiring them at her leisure, she came at last to Canova's private *atelier*. Being anxious to express to him her sincere admiration, she sent in her name. Canova immediately came out in his working dress, with his paper cap in his hand, and invited her into his mysterious little retreat, with a simplicity and politeness that, united to the delicacy of his Venetian accent, were very attractive.

Sympathy was soon established between the eminent artist, who was a passionate admirer of beauty, and Mme. Récamier, a lover of art and worshipper of genius. Canova, in company with his brother, returned her visit that same evening, and from that time never failed to pass a part of every evening with her. He came early, and went away a little before ten o'clock. Mme. Récamier frequently went to his *atelier* to see him work. He liked to talk of his art, and the compositions he contemplated. Every day he sent her a note for a good-morning, written in that caressing and rather exaggerated style characteristic of the Italian tongue.

The care that Canova took of his health was constant

and minute. His day was regulated as methodically as that of a monk. He went every morning to hear his brother, the abbé, say mass. This brother was his shadow. Nothing could be more touching than the relations between them. This abbé was much younger than Canova, and only his half-brother, on his mother's side. He was of timid character, subtile and slow in intellect, and, like all Italians, mistrustful. Having had a good education, he was secretary and reader to his elder brother. During the whole of Mme. Récamier's stay in Rome, he composed a sonnet daily, which he dedicated to *la bellissima Zulieta.*

In his style of living, Canova was simple and liberal. He lived on a second floor in the Corso, in large rooms, comfortably furnished, and embellished with fine engravings. His servants wore no livery; his carriage was plain; his table, abundant and well served; and he took pleasure in dispensing a large hospitality. To artists and men of letters, he was ever ready to lend a helping hand; and he paid his workmen magnificently. Canova was very handsome, of a noble and dignified figure. His manners were affectionate and simple. He was not only good, but good-natured and lively, — qualities that did not exclude finesse, or the practice of an innocent deception. He did not speak French easily, and preferred to converse in his own language. His friendship for Mme. Récamier was tender and sincere. His nature had need of affection; he liked quiet and regularity; and warmly appreciated the charm of association with a bright, intelligent woman, who was always sweet-tempered, and who knew how to admire and praise with enthusiasm.

In the early part of July, Mme. Récamier had a visit of a week from M. Ballanche. He had travelled post from Lyons without stopping, either night or day, for fear of wasting any of his precious time. Mme. Récamier was delighted to see him, and, in order to do the honors of Rome, took him to drive upon the evening of his arrival. The evening was brilliant, and it was proposed to take a stroll through the Coliseum and St. Peter's. Canova, who was of the party, covered himself up as well as he could in a large mantle, trembling lest the serene breezes

of evening should give him a cold, and thinking that Frenchwomen had singular fancies for walking out in the night air; while M. Ballanche, happy in finding himself again in the society of Mme. Récamier, and moved by the aspect of the places and their serious associations, walked on with great strides, his hands behind his back (a habit of his), and saying nothing. Suddenly Mme. Récamier noticed that his head was bare.

"M. Ballanche," she said, "where is your hat?"

"Ah!" he replied, "it is at Alexandria."

He had, in fact, left his hat there; and never dreamed of replacing it, so little was he occupied with the details of daily life. Recalled to Lyons by duty to his father, Ballanche saw with despair the time of his visit passing rapidly away. During the journey back, he wrote: —

July 10, 1813.

I must not allow myself to be overcome by ennui. I am alone, and the solitude weighs heavily upon me. Permit me, madame, to solace myself by talking a moment with you. For such times I have no resources. I have no taste for reading. Looking at fine scenery and monuments is only a mechanical action of the eyes, a fatigue to my brain: I do not take to it. In such moments of emptiness and dreariness, I could commit suicide. I am between Rome and Lyons. It seems to me I am entirely out of my element. I find no resources within myself, not even enough to aid me in passing the time. What a poor sad nature is mine! Those days in Rome are gone to return no more! Oh that I could live them over again, or, at least, if I could know that you are in a state of repose, taking an interest in life and smiling at vexations! But I have too much reason to think that you also lead an irksome life. I think of you on the doleful terrace of that doleful palace where you live, — a veritable exile's home.

M. Ballanche's own grief in leaving Mme. Récamier alone in a foreign land caused him to take too melancholy a view of her life there. She herself confessed that her sojourn in Italy was the most endurable period of her exile, so much did she enjoy the pleasures to be derived from art.

When the season advanced, and Rome was becoming deserted on account of the heat and the malaria, Canova invited Mme. Récamier to share his rooms at Albano, at the

hotel Emiliano. This urgent and cordial invitation was accepted; and Mme. Récamier became, for two months, the guest of Canova, on the condition, that, when he and his brother came out there, they were to share her table. Canova never abandoned his work or his studio for any length of time. When the heat was excessive, he would go out into the country for refreshment for a few days, but never made a prolonged stay; and he had chosen Albano as the healthiest spot for a residence.

His establishment there was of the most modest character. The hotel Emiliano was on the market-place, facing quite a steep street that led up to the church. The suite was on the second floor. Canova reserved for himself the rooms facing the square, and gave to Mme. Récamier those commanding a view of the Campagna. On the left was Pompey's villa, surrounded by magnificent trees. In the distance was the sea, and below the balcony of Mme. Récamier's room stretched a vast undulating plain, affording one of the most beautiful of prospects. This apartment, which was used as a drawing-room, had white cotton curtains; and its walls were adorned with colored engravings of Herculaneum, by a Roman artist. J. B. Bassi painted a picture of this residence. Mme. Récamier is represented seated near the window reading. The magnificent view and the simplicity of the furniture are very naturally rendered. Canova sent this picture to Mme. Récamier, in 1816.

Early every morning, Mme. Récamier and her little companion took a walk through the beautiful paths that border the Lake of Albano, and are called galleries. The marvellous foliage, the aspect of the lake and its shores sparkling in the morning light, were incomparably beautiful. Canova and the abbé came out from time to time, and stayed three or four days, to breathe the salubrious air and the perfume of the woods.

While leading this pleasant, monotonous life, Mme. Récamier cultivated, as at Châlons, the friendship of the organist, and played the organ every Sunday at high mass and vespers. One Sunday in September, when *la signora Francese*, as she was known in Albano, was returning home

after vespers, she saw a great crowd of men, in large hats and mantles, standing before a low door-way. They seemed dejected and dismayed; and, in reply to her questions, stated that a fisherman of the coast, accused of complicity with the English, had just been confined in the low, grated room that served as a prison, and that he was to be shot the next day. At that instant the prisoner's confessor, whom Mme. Récamier knew, came out of the dungeon. He was extremely agitated; and, upon seeing the French lady, whose alms had more than once passed through his hands, he imagined that she might have some influence with the French authorities, upon whom the fate of the unfortunate man depended. He came toward her. The crowd, who, no doubt, had the same notion, cleared a passage for her; and, before exchanging ten words with the priest, Mme. Récamier found herself in the prisoner's cell, without any very clear idea of how she got there.

The unhappy young man was in irons. His head was bare, his eyes were wild with fear, his teeth chattered, the sweat rolled off his forehead, and his whole appearance indicated the greatest agony. Mme. Récamier's sympathies were so excited at his distress, that she leaned forward, and clasped him in her arms. The confessor explained to him, that the lady was French, kind and generous; that she compassionated him, and would try to procure his pardon. At the word "pardon," his reason returned a little. "*Pietà! pietà!*" he cried. The priest made him promise to pray to God, compose himself, and take some nourishment, while his protectress went to Rome to solicit his reprieve. The execution was fixed for the next morning; so there was not a moment to lose. Mme. Récamier returned home, ordered post-horses, and left an hour later, resolving to do all in her power to save the unhappy man. She saw the French authorities, but found them inflexible. General Miollis was polite and cordial, but he could do nothing. M. de Norvins was hard and almost menacing. He replied to Mme. Récamier's pressing entreaties by advising her not to forget her own situation, and reminded her that it was not the

place of an exile to try and retard justice under the emperor's government. She returned to Albano the next morning, depressed by her ill-success, and haunted by the face of the unfortunate man whom she had seen a prey to all the terrors of death. The confessor called upon her in the course of the day, and brought her the blessing of the poor supplicant. The hope of pardon had sustained him, until his eyes were bandaged. He had slept during the night, and taken food in the morning. He was executed on the sea-shore; and his eyes were turned incessantly toward Rome, where he thought he saw *la signora Francese* coming with his pardon. This account, without diminishing Mme. Récamier's regrets, calmed her mind, since it showed, that, if her intervention had not saved the life of the prisoner, it had at least soothed his last moments.

In October, Mme. Récamier returned to Rome. Winter brought but few travellers: the events of the war, the reverses of our armies, and the check given to Bonaparte's power by means of the coalition of Europe, kept all hearts in perpetual anxiety. A victim of Napoleon's tyranny, Mme. Récamier had reason to desire his overthrow. She might have looked upon the event that gave her liberty to return to France as the signal of the enfranchisement of the world; but her personal interests did not render her insensible either to the glory of our arms or to the reverses of our soldiers, and she never allowed a word derogatory to the national honor to be uttered in her presence.

Mme. Récamier had been strongly urged to complete her Italian tour by a sojourn in Naples. The idea was very agreeable to her; but she hesitated to take this step, not knowing what reception she might meet with, as an exile, from the sovereigns, King Joachim and Queen Caroline (M. and Mme. Murat). But assured by a letter from M. de Rohan-Chabot, the Emperor's Chamberlain, who had previously left Rome for Naples, that she would meet with a kind reception, she started the first part of December, 1813. As the roads at this period were infested by brigands, she travelled in company with an

Englishman, the famous collector of antiquities, Sir J. Coghill. They travelled post; but it took them two days to get to Naples. At the second relay, Velletri, they found the horses, for both their carriages, all harnessed, the postillions ready; and they started again with all the promptitude of a fairy tale. The same thing happened at every successive stage, and they could not comprehend the miracle. At last, at one of the relays, some mention was made of the courier who had preceded them, and had ordered their horses to be in readiness. It then became evident that they had profited by a mistake.

Thanks to the way in which they had been treated, they arrived very early at Terracina, where they were to sup and sleep. Mme. Récamier had just completed her toilette, and was waiting for supper, when a great noise of bells, horses, and cracking of whips, drew her to the window. She saw two carriages, with the same number of horses as they had had; and concluded that it could only be the travellers whose relays they had so persistently carried off. In a few moments, a step was heard on the stairway; and a man cried out in a loud and irritated tone of voice, "Where are those insolent people who stole my horses on the whole route?" At this voice, which Mme. Récamier recognized marvellously well, she came out of the room, and, with a burst of laughter, replied, "Here they are. It is I, Monsieur le Duc." Fouché, Duke d'Otranto, — for it was he, — drew back, a little ashamed of his fury. Without appearing to notice his embarrassment, Mme. Récamier invited him into her room. Fouché was hurrying on to Naples, charged with a mission from the emperor. He was to maintain Murat in his allegiance. The earth was beginning to shake under the feet of the conqueror. Joachim had been warmly pressed by the English to join the coalition, and only half resisted; and that through a sentiment of honor. It was therefore very important for Bonaparte not to lose this ally, and Fouché had reason to be in haste. In the rather sharp half-hour's conversation that he had with Mme. Récamier, he asked her petulantly what business she had at Naples, and wanted to give

her some prudent counsel. "Yes, madame," he said, "remember that when we are weak, we ought to be amiable."

"And when we are strong, we ought to be just," she replied.

The old Minister of the Imperial Police continued his journey; and the other travellers arrived peaceably at Naples the next day.

Scarcely was Mme. Récamier installed in the rooms, taken for her by M. de Rohan, at Magati's, on the Chiaja, when a page came from the queen with kind congratulations on her happy arrival, inquiries after her health, and a message, in the name of both sovereigns, expressing a desire to see her as soon as possible. The page also brought a large basket of magnificent fruit and flowers.

The next day, Mme. Récamier presented herself at the palace, and was received by the king and queen with every mark of cordiality and affection.

Mme. Murat, when she wished to please, could not fail of success. Susceptible of true affection, her heart had not been spoiled by prosperity; and she had more dignity, and regard for propriety, than the other ladies of her family. Her attentions to people she liked were very delicate. She seemed to divine their tastes and habits, taking care to gratify the former and conform herself to the latter. She perfectly overwhelmed Mme. Récamier with favors, placing a box at all the theatres at her disposal, giving parties in her honor; and, what was better still, receiving her on the footing of a familiar friend. The queen gave her precedence of all the ladies of her court, and Mme. Récamier was rendered uncomfortable every time she noticed that their jealousy or self-love was wounded on her account. One day, at Portici, when they were passing from one room to another, the queen having gone on before, Mme. Récamier thought it a good opportunity to make amends to these ladies for their former little humiliations, and stepped back to allow them to precede her. This they were inclined to do in an arrogant manner, when the queen turned round, and, perceiving their intention, gave the unfortunate ladies a withering glance, and said, in a sharp tone, "Eh! Mme. Récamier?"

Mme. Récamier arrived in Naples at a grave crisis in the fate of that kingdom. Murat had been a faithful ally, a submissive vassal of Napoleon, and it cost him much to separate himself from France; but the course of the war scarcely left him any alternative. Murat had made several attempts to induce his brother-in-law to make an honorable peace, still possible at that time; but Napoleon treated with inconceivable haughtiness the sovereigns whom he had created, and did not condescend even to reply to the letters of the King of Naples.

In the meanwhile, England and Austria redoubled their efforts to induce Murat to join the coalition. It was not difficult to demonstrate to him, that it was the sole means by which he could avoid being involved in the downfall of Napoleon, now imminent; nor was it harder to prove to him that the interests of his subjects ought to be consulted before those of the emperor, and that his duties as king should prevail over the claims upon him as a French citizen.

The Neapolitans declared themselves loudly for separation from France. The people desired peace at any price. Placed in a position by the allies where he was obliged to decide quickly, Murat signed the treaty that bound him to the coalition, Jan. 11, 1814. When the transaction was to be made public, Murat, excessively agitated, came to his wife's apartments, and found Mme. Récamier there. He went up to her, and asked her what she advised, hoping, no doubt, that she would counsel him according to his wishes.

"You are a Frenchman, sire," she replied. "You ought to be faithful to France. It is to her that you owe allegiance."

Murat turned pale, and, violently pushing open the window of a great balcony looking upon the sea, said, "Then I am a traitor;" pointing at the same time to the English fleet, under full sail, entering the port of Naples. Throwing himself on a couch, he covered his face with his hands, and burst into tears. The queen was more composed, though not less moved; and, fearing that his agitation would be perceived, she prepared for him a glass of orange-water, and besought him to be calm.

This violent sorrow did not last long. The king and queen got into their carriage, and drove through the city, where they were greeted with enthusiastic acclamations. That evening they appeared at the theatre, along with the Austrian Envoy Extraordinary, negotiator of the treaty, and with the commander of the English forces, and were received with the same demonstrations of applause. The third day, Murat left Naples to put himself at the head of his troops; leaving his wife, who had a decided capacity for government, to act as regent.

One morning, during Joachim's absence, when Mme. Récamier came to see the queen, she found her ill in bed, and engaged with the Minister of Justice, who was giving her papers to sign. Mme. Récamier took a seat apart, and the queen continued her employment. As she was about to sign a certain document, she paused, and said, —

"You would be very unhappy, dear Mme. Récamier, were you in my place; for I am just going to sign a death-warrant."

"Ah! madame," she replied, rising, "you will not sign it; and, since Heaven has brought me here at this time, it is a sign that Providence would save this unhappy man."

The queen smiled, and, turning to the minister, said, "Mme. Récamier does not want this poor unfortunate to die. Can we grant his pardon?" After a short discussion, clemency carried the day, and the man was pardoned.

This incident, which Mme. Récamier considered one of the happiest of her life, left a very pleasant impression upon her, and was a compensation for the sorrow she had felt at Albano.

The ceremonies of Holy Week recalled travellers to Rome, and Mme. Récamier joyfully returned to her friends, the Canovas. Their reception of her, though cordial and affectionate, was slightly tinged with an air of mystery; and, a few days afterward, they made her promise to come to the studio to see the works executed during her absence. After taking her through all the rooms, where there was little or nothing new to be seen, they finally brought her into the private *atelier;* and, when they were seated, Canova, who all along had scarcely been able to contain

himself, drew a curtain, and displayed two clay busts of Mme. Récamier, one with no ornament but the hair, the other with the addition of a veil. "*Mira, se ho pensato a lei*,"[1] said Canova, with all the warmth of friendship, and with the satisfaction of an artist who believes in his success.

But to Mme. Récamier the surprise was not agreeable, deeply touched as she was by this evidence of Canova's devotion. In spite of her efforts to conceal her feelings, they were perceived by the artist. He was keenly hurt; and in vain did Mme. Récamier try to remove the first impression he had received. Canova only half forgave her. He added a crown of olives to the bust with a veil, and when, a little time after, Mme. Récamier asked him what he had done with it, he replied, "It did not please you; so I made a Beatrice of it." Such was the origin of the beautiful bust of the Beatrice of Dante, afterward put into marble. A copy was sent to Mme. Récamier, after Canova's death, by his brother, with these lines: —

"*Sovra candido vel, cinta d'oliva,*
Donna m'apparve. — DANTE.

"*Ritratto di Giuletta Récamier modellato di memoria da Canova, nel* 1813, *e poi consacrato in marmo col nome di Beatrice.*"

Meanwhile, France was invaded; and Mme. Murat, in writing to Mme. Récamier of her anxieties, expressed a wish to see her again. The latter accordingly returned to Naples, where she found her royal friend bending under the weight of the regency, and absorbed in the gloomiest reflections. The throne of Murat seemed firm; but Napoleon's fortunes were decided. The allied troops had entered Paris; and this great captain, this brother, whom Mme. Murat had left all-powerful, and whom she regarded not only with admiration but superstition, had departed for Elba!

After passing several days with the queen, Mme. Récamier took a sympathetic leave of her, and returned to Rome.

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[1] "See, if I have not thought of you."

Before she left the Eternal City for Paris, she was fortunate in seeing one of those extraordinary spectacles which fill the soul with profound and ineffable emotion, — the entry of Pius VII. into his capital. She witnessed the pageant from the top of the raised seats erected beneath the porticos of the two churches at the entrance to the Corso, facing the Porto del Popolo. Never was there a more compact crowd or one more clamorous with delirious enthusiasm than this. The great Roman magnates, with all the young men of rank, had gone to meet the pope at Storta, where the horses were taken from the pontiff's carriage, which was dragged and preceded by men with beaming faces. Pius VII. was upon his knees, his whole bearing expressive of humility. Though he was returning in triumph, he seemed overwhelmed by emotion; and, while he blessed the kneeling people, he bowed himself before God, the Master of the world. It was not only the entry of a sovereign, it was the triumph of the martyr.

Within a few days, Mme. Récamier set out joyfully for Paris. On her way, she stopped at Lyons, and was present at the first fêtes given in honor of the Bourbons. Here she heard from Mme. de Staël: —

PARIS, May 20, 1814.

I am ashamed to be in Paris without you, dear angel of my life. Let me know what your plans are. Would you like to have me meet you at Coppet, where I want to pass four months? After so many trials, you are my sweetest prospect; and my heart is devoted to you for ever. I am waiting for a line from you to know what I shall do. I have written to you at Rome and Naples.

Mme. Récamier arrived in Paris the 1st of June, after an exile of nearly three years.

CHAPTER VII.

1814–1817.

Society during the first Restoration. — The Duke of Wellington. — Dinner at St. Leu. — M. de Rocca. — The Queen of Naples. — Benjamin Constant. — The 20th of March. — Note from Queen Hortense. — Letter from the Queen of Naples. — Second Restoration. — Mme. Krüdner. — Her letters. — Letters of M. Ballanche. — Mme. Récamier's interview with the young German. — Marriage of Mlle. de Staël. — Return of Mme. de Staël to Paris. — Her death. — Memoranda of M. de Montmorency.

THE Restoration was the beginning of a new era in the life of Mme. Récamier, — an era in which she enjoyed all that life could offer of power, pleasure, and renown. In person, she was as lovely as ever; and to the fame of her beauty was added the prestige of her self-sacrifice and unmerited persecution. Her joy at being restored to Paris and her friends lent another charm to the seduction of her manners, and the élite of European society acknowledged her as the queen of beauty and fashion. Her husband had in a measure retrieved his heavy losses; and she was in possession of her mother's fortune, valued at four hundred thousand francs. She kept her carriage, which with her was a positive necessity, as she never walked in the street. She had a box at the opera, and on opera nights held her receptions, after the performances.

To her social successes were added the joys of renewed friendships. Mme. de Staël was in Paris, and Matthieu de Montmorency; who was overjoyed at the re-establishment of the house of Bourbon, the object of his worship and regrets, and had been appointed *Chevalier d'Honneur* to Madame the Duchess d'Angoulême.

The Restoration also brought back to France another old friend of Mme. Récamier, from whom she had been separated by proscription and exile for ten years, — Mme. Moreau, widow of the illustrious and unfortunate general.

After the death of Moreau, who was struck by a French bullet when in the ranks of the Russian army, the Emperor Alexander bestowed upon his widow a pension of a hundred thousand francs. On the return of the Bourbons to France, Louis XVIII., wishing to testify his respect for the memory of the Republican general, offered Mme. Moreau the title of "Duchess." She refused it, and would only accept the dignity which would have belonged to the soldier had he been living. The title of *Maréchale de France* was then conferred upon her. It is, I believe, the only time that this title has been given to a woman.

In the salon of Mme. Récamier were to be seen three generations of the Montmorencies-Laval. The old duke, still living; his son, Adrien de Montmorency, Prince de Laval; and his grandson, Henri de Montmorency. The latter had just made his entrance into society, and was immediately captivated by Mme. Récamier. Adrien de Montmorency said gracefully, in jesting upon the impression that she had made upon every generation of his race, that "they did not all die of it, but all were wounded."

Among other habitual visitors, belonging to the old aristocracy, who frequented Mme. Récamier's salon, were the Marquis de Boisgelin and his daughter, Mme. Alexis de Noailles; the Marchionesses de Catellan and d'Aguesseau; the Duchess de Cars; her daughter, the charming Marchioness de Podenas; her brother, Sigismund de Nadaillac; Messieurs de Broglie, de Chauvelin, Armand, and Paul de Bourgoing. Also, a large number of distinguished persons whose rank dated from the Revolution. Foremost among them was the Princess Royal of Sweden, Mme. Bernadotte, for whom Mme. Récamier had a sincere friendship. The princess had returned to Paris on account of her health, which could not endure the rigor of the Swedish climate. She bore in France the title of Duchess de Gothland. She was a kind, trustworthy, modest person, devoted to domestic life, and never designed by nature for supreme rank, as she had no ambition, and detested restraint and etiquette.

Society was very gay this year (1814) in Paris. The national pride was undoubtedly wounded by the presence of foreign soldiers in the capital of France; but we consoled

ourselves with the reflection, that our troops had bivouacked in the palaces of all the continental sovereigns. Moreover, disgust with the war, with conscription, and the Imperial Government was such that it may be truly said, that the overthrow of this despotic power gave to the whole country a feeling of deliverance. The prestige of our arms was still so great with the foreign conquerors, that they themselves seemed astonished at their victory; and, in the bearing of their soldiers as in that of their sovereigns, there was a very obvious shade of respect and deference toward the French nation. All this disappeared at the second invasion. In 1814, we still retained our treasures of art gained by conquest: we lost them after the Hundred Days.

It was at Mme. de Staël's that Mme. Récamier first met the Duke of Wellington. Having found memoranda in relation to her intercourse with the English general, which she had intended writing out, I insert them here: —

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

Mme. de Staël's enthusiasm for the Duke of Wellington. I see him at her house for the first time. Conversation during dinner. He pays me a visit the next day. Mme. de Staël meets him here. Conversation about him after his departure. Lord Wellington's visits become frequent. His opinion of popularity. I present him to Queen Hortense. Soirée at the Duchess de Luynes. Conversation with the Duke of Wellington before a glass door. M. de Talleyrand and the Duchess de Courlande. *Empressement* of M. de Talleyrand toward me. The feeling of avoidance I have always had for him. Mme. de Boigne stops me as I am leaving, followed by the Duke of Wellington. Continuation of his visits. Mme. de Staël wishes me to obtain influence over him. He writes me unmeaning notes, which all resemble each other.[1] I lend him Mlle. de

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[1] The following note from the Duke of Wellington is inserted by Chateaubriand in his memoirs. — ED.

PARIS, June 13.

I confess, madame, that I am not very sorry that business matters will prevent my calling upon you after dinner; since every time I see you, I leave you more deeply impressed with your charms, and less disposed to give my attention to politics!!! I shall call upon you to-morrow, provided you are at home, upon my return from the Abbé Sicard's, and in spite of the effect such dangerous visits have upon me.

Your very faithful servant, WELLINGTON.

Lespinasse's letters, that had just come out. His opinion of these letters. He leaves Paris. I see him again after the battle of Waterloo. He calls upon me the day after his return. I did not expect him. My annoyance at this visit. He comes back in the evening, and finds my door closed. I refuse also to see him the next day. He writes to Mme. de Staël, to complain of me. I do not see him again. His position and his success in Paris society. They say that he is very much taken up with a young English lady, wife of one of his aides-de-camp. Return of Mme. de Staël to Paris. Dinner at the Queen of Sweden's with her and the Duke of Wellington, whom I then see again. His coolness to me; his attention to the young English lady. I am placed at dinner between him and the Duke de Broglie. He is sullen at the beginning of dinner, but grows animated, and finishes by being very agreeable. I perceive the annoyance of the young English lady seated opposite us. I stop talking to him, and devote myself solely to the Duke de Broglie.' I see the Duke of Wellington very seldom. He comes to see me at the Abbaye-aux-Bois, on his last visit to Paris.

Mme. Récamier was undoubtedly flattered by the homage paid her by the Duke of Wellington; but all his military glory and political importance could not make her think him either animated or interesting, and, no matter what Mme. de Staël may have said, she did not try to exert an influence which, without a doubt, she could have easily obtained over the English general.

When he called to see her after the battle of Waterloo, she confesses that this unexpected visit disturbed her. It was her patriotism that was wounded; and this feeling was the more honorable in one who, having been proscribed by Bonaparte, had a right to rejoice in the defeat of her persecutor. The duke mistook the cause of her emotion: he attributed it to enthusiasm, and therefore said to her, alluding to Napoleon, "I have given him a good beating." This remark, from the lips of a man like Lord Wellington, disgusted Mme. Récamier; and she closed her door upon him. A boastful temper, it must be acknowledged, was not a characteristic of the duke; but, at this period of his career, he did not escape the intoxication of success. It may perhaps be remembered, that, after the battle of Waterloo, he had the royal box of the opera

opened, from which he, with his aides-de-camp, would have witnessed the play, had not the indignant murmurs of the pit warned him of the impropriety he was committing.

I find among the notes, rightly termed "insignificant," from the conqueror of Waterloo, the one referring to Mlle. de Lespinasse's letters:—

PARIS, Oct. 20, 1814.

I was away hunting all day yesterday, madame; and I did not receive your note and the books until evening, when it was too late to reply to you. I was hoping that my judgment would be guided by yours in reading Mlle. Espinasse's letters, and I despair of being able to form one myself. I am very much obliged to you for Mme. de Staël's pamphlet.

Your very obedient and faithful servant,

WELLINGTON.

The style and spelling[1] do not show in this hero any great command of the French language. What he calls the *pamphlet* of Mme. de Staël can only be her book on Germany, which appeared in 1814.

It was Mme. Récamier who introduced Queen Hortense to the duke soon after the Restoration, at her own request, as she desired to be put in communication with the commander-in-chief of the English forces. Queen Hortense did not leave Paris on the downfall of Napoleon. She accepted from Louis XVIII. the erection of her estate at St. Leu into a duchy, of which she took the title. Mme. Récamier had known Hortense before her elevation to the throne. She was an inoffensive person, kind and generous, with refined tastes and elegant manners, and had always more ambition than she avowed.

In the course of that summer, Mme. Récamier and Mme. de Staël accepted an invitation to dinner at St. Leu, with Prince Augustus of Prussia, M. de Latour-Maubourg, M. de Lascour, and the Duchess de Frioul.

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[1] J'étais tout hier à la chasse, madame; et je n'ai reçu votre billet et les livres qu'à la nuit, quand c'était trop tard pour vous répondre. J'espérais que mon jugement serait guidé par le vôtre dans ma lecture des lettres de Mlle. Espinasse et je désespére de pouvoir le former moi-même. Je vous suis bien obligé pour la pamphlete de Mme. de Staël.

Votre très-obéissant et fidèle serviteur,

WELLINGTON

Before dinner, they all took a drive in open carriages. A view of the valley recalling to Mme. de Staël an Italian landscape, she expressed, with her usual warmth, her admiration for the scenery of the South.

"Have you been in Italy, then?" asked the Duchess de St. Leu. "Corinne, Corinne!" exclaimed everybody present. The duchess, perceiving her blunder, blushed; and the subject was changed.

After dinner they had music, and the duchess sang a ballad she had composed for her brother Eugène. Then the Emperor Napoleon was spoken of; and Mme. de Staël, who sometimes asked untimely questions, put some inquiries to Hortense, which visibly disconcerted her.

Some weeks afterward, Mme. de Staël, whose health was already very much impaired, left Paris to spend the autumn at Coppet. She had, in 1811, secretly married a young officer of twenty-seven, M. de Rocca. When she first became acquainted with him at Geneva, he was supposed to be dying of his wounds. He was remarkably handsome in person, and very noble in character. He accompanied Mme. de Staël in the long journey she took to escape Imperial persecution, and returned with her and her children to Paris, after Napoleon's overthrow. Dying of consumption, he was so weak that he had to be supported, almost carried, whenever he paid visits with her. He, however, survived her a year.

In the month of October, of this same year, 1814, the sovereigns of the Holy Alliance met in congress at Vienna, to arrange the conditions of the new balance of power in Europe. The King of Naples was not without anxiety with regard to the resolutions that might be passed with respect to his kingdom. He therefore desired, that in this assembly of sovereigns, where his rights would be attacked, they should also be explained and defended; and the queen, who kept up a constant correspondence with Mme. Récamier, wrote to her for advice in the choice of a publicist to prepare a comprehensive memorial that should enlighten Congress, and dispose it to be favorable to King Joachim. Mme. Récamier immediately proposed Benjamin Constant; and, after receiving the sanction of the Court of Naples,

she made an appointment with him to give him the necessary instructions.

Mme. Récamier had known Benjamin Constant for more than ten years; and I find in a letter addressed to her by him in February, 1810, a passage which is a good illustration of their relations before the Restoration: —

I am passing some time among snow-drifts and my family. In our day one cannot bury one's self too much. All my tastes likewise incline me to repose, and my duties allow me to enjoy it. I am trying, like you, to become a devotee; and I think I am further advanced, since there are fewer people interested in opposing my progress.

During the latter part of my stay in Paris, you treated me extremely like a stranger. This was not right; for, of all your friends, I am perhaps the most disinterested. This is no merit; but I am also the one who most earnestly wishes to see you happy, and who follows you with eyes full of emotion, when you hover, as you are still doing, between heaven and earth. I am of the opinion that Heaven will carry you off, and, having unhappily nothing to gain if earth is the victor, I am for Heaven. Adieu, madame.

Yours, with many kind wishes and much respect,

BENJAMIN CONSTANT.

Benjamin Constant had rare and brilliant talents; but he was a very fickle, unequal person, without firm moral principles. The passions in which he had worn out his life had inflamed his head rather than touched his heart; and he had contracted such a need and habit of excitement that he sought for it everywhere, even in gaming.

In the two hours' interview that Mme. Récamier had with him, she wished to please, and succeeded only too well: he left her presence madly in love. Throughout the whole winter, he was a victim to this foolish passion; for he never had the slightest encouragement. Mme. Récamier acknowledged his intellectual superiority, but she thoroughly disliked his scepticism. Still the affairs of Joachim and Mme. Murat obliged her often to consult with him, and it is certain that he made this business a pretext to see her more frequently.

When Napoleon left Elba, and landed at Cannes, all Paris was in consternation. I have a distinct recollection

of the agitation this event caused among Mme. Récamier's friends. Mme. de Staël came to say good-bye, and besought Mme. Récamier to leave, and not face their common persecutor. She met there Mme. Moreau, who fled to England, the Duchess de Raguse, and others; and, in the excitement of the moment, most of the farewells were made in the ante-chamber.

The news was received by all who were not friends to military despotism as the announcement of great danger to the nation and liberty. Benjamin Constant's political principles had always been opposed to despotism. His attitude in the tribune is a sufficient proof of this, as is also his fine work on the "Spirit of Conquest." His best friends had been persecuted by Napoleon, and he had every reason to dread his return. On the 19th March appeared his famous article in the "Journal des Débats," an eloquent protest for right against might, the last paragraph of which has been so often quoted:—

"Parisians, no: such will not be our language; such, at least, will not be mine. I have seen that liberty is possible under a monarchy: I have seen the nation rallying around the king. I will not be a miserable turncoat, and crawl from one power to another. I will not cover infamy with sophistry, and stammer out words profaned, to ransom a shameful life."

It has been repeatedly said and published, that the desire of pleasing Mme. Récamier was the only motive that induced Benjamin Constant to write this article; but this is a mistake and a calumny. Benjamin Constant was faithful to the principles of his whole life in expressing his hatred of tyranny. The thing to be regretted is the weakness that caused him to return to Paris within a few hours after leaving it, and led him to consent to see Napoleon, by whom he allowed himself to be fascinated. In consenting to be nominated one of the Council of State during the Hundred Days, Benjamin Constant filled up the measure of his weakness.

Mme. Récamier was not willing to leave Paris. She did not think it necessary to condemn herself to another separation from her country and friends. She received a

note from the Duchess de St. Leu, and a letter from Naples, almost at the same moment: —

DUCHESS DE ST. LEU TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

March 23, 1815.

I hope that you are tranquil, and that you will not leave Paris, where you have friends. You may trust to me to take care of your interests. I am convinced that I will not even have occasion to show you how delighted I should be to be useful to you. Such would be my desire; but, under any circumstances, count upon me, and believe that I shall be very happy to prove my friendship for you. HORTENSE.

THE QUEEN OF NAPLES TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

NAPLES, March, 1815.

MY DEAR JULIETTE, — I have now another chance to write to you, though I know that you have little leisure, and that, brilliant and sought after, I am making all Paris cry out, by stealing you away from them a few moments to read and reply to my letters. But your friendship is necessary to me. I hope also, that your little Amelia remembers me: talk to her about me sometimes, so that, if I ever see her again, I shall not seem a stranger to her.

I shall be very happy to have your agreeable friend[1] here. By that title, she already has a right to my affections, and her wit and worth insure her my esteem and consideration. As for you, my lovely Juliette, if some circumstances that I certainly do not desire, but that may happen, should make it necessary for you to travel, come here, where you will at all times find a very sincere and loving friend. We hear a great many rumors. Let me know the truth: write me full particulars about every thing. We are very tranquil here. I wish all the world were as much so.

I re-open my letter. I have just received most alarming news, — that Paris is in revolt, — the king lost, — every thing overturned, in fact. Do not forget that you, your family, your friend, have friends here who will be happy to receive you. Here you will meet with friendship, service, and protection. Say to M. de Rohan, that he and his family will be received and treated here the same as he was when he came alone.

We are very tranquil here. The state of France and of all other countries where the old monarchs have returned, has

[1] Mme. de Staël.

done us great good. The people love us, and we love them sincerely. A change of government would involve, moreover, acts of vengeance and other calamities. They dread, more than ever, any thing that tends to bring back Ferdinand. It is also true that the actual sovereigns are concerned for the good of their subjects: they have fine troops and an able commander, whom it would not be easy to replace. Every thing promises us, therefore, a tranquil future. This is the more fortunate, as it gives me the certainty of being able to offer you a sure refuge in the storms of life. It will be very sweet to me to do something to prove to you, and to your friends likewise, the extent and strength of my attachment.

CAROLINE.

It has been the fate of our generation to witness very sad and frequent revolutions. Each of these changes has been marked by sharp re-actions and by party violence. It was not otherwise in 1815, notwithstanding the magnanimity shown by the princes of the House of Bourbon. Mme. Récamier's course of conduct was consistent with the moderation of her character. Though a royalist, she was a friend of liberty, and still received at her house all her old acquaintances, irrespective of party. She met, of course, with the usual experience of the impartial: persons holding strong opinions, one way or the other, said to her alternately, in speaking of the opposite party, "*Your friends, the liberals,*" or, "*Your friends, the ultras.*"

Benjamin Constant wrote to her the 19th of June, 1815: —

"The news appears to be frightful for us; excellent for your friends. To be true to your principles, you ought to pay a visit to Queen Hortense. It is still more your duty to be kind to me, for I am going to be in a very disagreeable position; that is, if a position can be bad that does not affect the heart. Follow your usual course, therefore, and be noble and generous toward me."

Disgrace and misfortune had certainly for Mme. Récamier the same sort of attraction that favor and success usually have for vulgar souls; and under no circumstances was she ever false to this characteristic.

When the allied sovereigns returned into our poor country, there came with them a woman who was a great favorite

of the Emperor Alexander. The Baroness Krüdner had led a very romantic life in her youth; but she was now given up to a mysticism as lofty as it was sincere. She had known Mme. Récamier in former years, and both ladies were anxious to renew the acquaintance. Mme. Krüdner lived in the Faubourg St. Honoré, near the Palace L'Élysée, occupied by the Emperor Alexander, who, passing through the garden, went every day to her house incognito. They discussed together ideas and theories with which a religious illuminism had more to do than politics. These tête-à-têtes always ended with prayer.

Mme. Krüdner had been very pretty, and, though no longer young, was still elegant; and her graceful appearance saved her from the ridicule that her pretensions to inspiration might easily have excited. Her goodness was real, and her charity unbounded. The influence she was known to exert over the mind of Alexander heightened the general curiosity to see and hear such a prophetess. Every evening, her salon was filled with a crowd of disciples, curious people, and courtiers. Nothing could be stranger than these re-unions, opening with prayer, and ending in bustle and worldly conversation. It was Mme. Krüdner who generally improvised on these occasions, and not without eloquence.

Mme. Krüdner was conciliating, and ready to assist others. She felt great compassion for Benjamin Constant, whom she had formerly known in Switzerland, and who was bowed down under the weight of universal reprobation. He was present one evening at a very crowded meeting in this odd sanctuary. Everybody was kneeling, he among the number, when the noise of some one coming in made him raise his head. He recognized the Duchess de Bourbon and her party. The eyes of the princess caught those of the publicist, who, embarrassed by his position and the place, bent down his head still lower, until his forehead touched the ground, thinking at the same time that the duchess was probably saying to herself, "What is that hypocrite doing there?"

Benjamin Constant went to Mme. Récamier's, upon leaving the assembly, and gayly related this adventure.

One of the faults of this rare intellect was to mock at himself and every thing else.

Mme. Récamier was frequently present at these meetings, and, as her arrival sometimes diverted attention from graver matters, Benjamin Constant was deputed to write to her on the subject

Thursday.

Mme. Krüdner has just charged me with rather an embarrassing commission. She begs that you will make your appearance with as few charms as possible. She says that you dazzle everybody, and consequently, as all hearts are disturbed, attention is impossible. You cannot divest yourself of your beauty; but, prithee, do not enhance it.

Mme. Krüdner attached, however, great importance to Mme. Récamier's presence, and she wrote to her on another occasion: —

Tuesday Evening, 1815.

Dear Friend, — As it is raining, there will probably be no one here this evening. Could you postpone coming until to-morrow? I think you may have already made this arrangement, on account of the weather. I shall have the happiness, I hope, dear angel, of embracing you to-morrow, and talking with you.

B. de Krüdner.

From Paris Mme. Krüdner went to Switzerland, whence she wrote to Mme. Récamier. Her mystical jargon, if it has all the marks of sincerity, is piquant, at least in the mouth of the author of "Valérie:"—

Berne, Nov. 12, 1815.

How I long to hear from you, dear and lovely friend; and how interested I am in you and your happiness, which will not be secured until you give yourself up wholly to God!

This is what I ask of Him when I am prostrate before the throne of mercy. I invoke Him for you. He has touched your heart by His grace; and that heart, which all the illusions and good things of the world have not been able to satisfy, has heard the call. No: you will not hesitate, dear friend. Your trials, the emptiness of the world, and the want of something grand, infinite, and eternal, which from time to time alarm and agitate you, were all signs to me that you would wholly declare yourself on the side of Heaven. I beseech you be true to these great impulses, and not allow yourself to be diverted from them. A frightful bitterness would be the result

of this departure from grace Ask, at the feet of Christ, for the faith of love divine; ask, and you shall receive; through a saintly terror, you will learn how grand life is, how infinite the love of that Saviour who died that we might escape the just punishment of our sins. Ah, if we could look upon our God, who took upon Himself our flesh in order to die for us, — if we could look upon Him with deep sorrow, and weep at the foot of the cross, for not having loved Him! Far from rejecting us, His arms will open to receive us; He will pardon us, and we shall at last know that peace which the world cannot give.

What is poor Benjamin doing? On leaving Paris, I wrote him again a few lines, and sent a message to you, dear friend. Did you get it? How is he getting on? You must be very charitable for a sick man much to be pitied; and you must pray for him. Our journey has been pleasant, thanks to God! Switzerland rests me: it is so beautiful and so calm, in the midst of the troubles of this distracted Europe. I have the happiness of being with my son at Berne, and we have the most delightful walks and affectionate talks together; for we love each other dearly. God has so guided and protected him, that the most beautiful things, and the most difficult for others to do, he does marvellously well. It is rare, at his age, to possess such remarkable acquirements, especially in a place where there are no advantages; and I can only thank the Lord for it. I do not despair of seeing you among these Alps, that are worth all the drawing-rooms in the world. I am delighted to hear from Mme. de Lezay, that you have seen her. She is an angel: she likes you very much, and can be useful to you, as she has made great progress in the grandest of careers. Write to me at Basle, dear friend: direct simply to me, care of M. Kellner. Tell me every thing, and believe in my tender affection. Do you see M. Delbel.[1] He is an excellent man. I am very anxious Benjamin should see him. I commend to you my poor Polonaise. Mme. de Lezay knows her. Kind regards from my daughter and myself; and believe me ever Yours, B. DE KRÜDNER.

Once more, dear friend, I commend our poor B. to your charitable heart. It is a sacred duty.

M. Ballanche, kept at Lyons by filial duties and business interests, passed several weeks at Paris in the course of this summer. He was presented by Mme. Récamier to all her friends; and, as at that time he was still unknown to

[1] Curé of Clichy.

fame, his diffidence and peculiar appearance caused some surprise in the elegant, cultivated, but frivolous society in which Mme. Récamier moved. Still, he was very promptly placed in his rightful position; and he left for Lyons, resolved to wind up his business affairs as quickly as possible, and establish himself at the capital.

M. BALLANCHE TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Lyons, Sept. 30, 1815.

You kindly question me about my private affairs. All is settled between M. Rusand and us. He will have to make another trip to Paris, and we must attend to the business in his absence. Upon his return, there will be accounts to settle, books to close, and a thousand little things consequent upon the closing-up of so complicated an establishment. My father and sister are not opposed to transporting our household gods elsewhere; provided we remain together, that is all they ask; yet I must confess that I cannot contemplate, without some anxiety, so decided a change of habits for them.

Among the inducements that you kindly urge for my removal to Paris, you mention my literary interests. On this point I entirely disagree with you. The arguments used in Camille Jordan's case are not applicable in mine. I am not a political writer; nor am I scholar, or a delineator of manners. I know the nature of my talent: it does not in any way require a residence at the capital. It lies in my affections and sentiments. Paris is no more necessary to my powers than to myself. It is you, and not Paris, that is necessary to me.

It was not easy, however, for M. Ballanche to transplant himself. Business, family interests, his sister's health, the fear of disturbing the habits of his old father (whom he tenderly loved), all combined to keep him in Lyons. Living in so unsettled a state made him melancholy, and his letters reveal his deep discouragement: —

M. BALLANCHE TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Jan. 22, 1816.

I thank you much for your tender and constant interest. You ask me to tell you all about myself. I live from day to day, and leave the future to take care of itself. This is not disinterestedness in me: it is necessity. My sister's health has sensibly improved; but she is in a state of sensitiveness and sadness that gives me infinite uneasiness. I am very much

afraid that this melancholy, and distaste for the world, will lead my poor sister to a cloister. If this happens, my place is near my father; and he is entering upon his sixty-ninth year. Thus, you see, I am now the creature of circumstances. I cannot form any plans: my future is no longer under my control.

I protest to you, in all sincerity, that my one absorbing thought is my warm feeling of friendship for you. I have need to be assured by you, and that as often as possible, that this sentiment shall not end in unhappiness for me. I confess, that every time I think of *it*, I feel a kind of terror that I cannot master. The idea often occurs to me, that you think you are attached to me, but that it is not really so. This thought is an agony, added to all my other torments. Your letters do me infinite good; but it does not last. You are so kind, you have so much sympathy for all unhappy people, that I at once class myself among these suffering beings, to whom you love to minister. It is through pity and condescension that you show kindness to me: you even deceive yourself, for kind hearts are subject to such sort of delusions. Pardon, a thousand times pardon; but you have solicited my confidence, and, indeed, to be entirely candid, it was right that I should tell you this. When I began this letter, I had no idea of writing you about so many things.

Life is full of trials: happily, time passes away, and sorrows pass with it. Keep me always acquainted with your plans, that, in thought at least, I may associate myself with them.

I can readily find the means of making a little trip to catch a glimpse of you, if I can see you entirely at my ease. This is my only hope: without that, I do not know what would become of me.

M. Ballanche was only half right when he said of himself, that he was "not a political writer." He was certainly never a publicist. The character of his genius disposed him to generalize. He avoided controversy and practical discussions, but he was animated all his life by the sincerest patriotism. His philanthropy was excessive; and France, in his eyes, never ceased to personify humanity. He considered her as charged by Providence with a mission of civilization and progress. The problems of social order were his chief objects of consideration. To insure the repose of France and the stability of her institutions, he felt that an alliance was necessary between the past and the present; and the idea, with him, partook of the nature

of a religious conviction. This generous passion for the public welfare, and for the conciliation of parties, was the inspiration of his "Essai sur les Institutions Sociales," "Le Vieillard et le Jeune Homme," and "L'Homme sans Nom."

M. Ballanche lost his father, 20th October, 1816; but he was not able to leave for Paris until the summer of 1817.

The previous summer (1816), Mme. Récamier went to Plombières with her niece, in obedience to the counsel of her physician, Dr. Récamier, her husband's cousin, and her own warm, personal friend.

She had been at Plombières a fortnight, the object of universal attention and respect, when, one morning, at an hour she did not receive visitors, the card of a young German was handed her. The gentleman was so urgent in his request to see her, that Mme. Récamier consented to give him an interview the next day. He made his appearance at the hour appointed, bowed to her, seated himself, and looked at her in silence. This mute admiration, flattering though embarrassing, threatening to be prolonged, Mme. Récamier ventured to ask the young gentleman, if they had any acquaintances in common among his countrymen, and if this was the reason he had desired to know her.

"No, madame," replied the candid young man, "I have never heard you spoken of; but, learning that a person who bore a celebrated name was at Plombières, I would not for any thing in the world have returned to Germany, without having seen a woman so nearly related to the illustrious Dr. Récamier, and who bears his name."

This little check to vanity, this admiration, which, in her presence, had something else beside herself for its object, greatly amused Mme. Récamier, who gayly related the misadventure.

In 1816, Mme. de Staël went to Italy on account of M. de Rocca's health. She wrote from Pisa to Mme. Récamier, in reference to her daughter Albertine's marriage with the Duke de Broglie: —

PISA, Feb. 17, 1816.

I am much touched, dearest and loveliest, by the letter my son brought me, and still more so by the one received this

morning. Your friendship is like the spring in the desert, that never fails; and this it is which makes it impossible not to love you. My son and M. de Broglie have arrived; and next Tuesday, at noon, the double ceremony, Catholic and Protestant, will be performed in English and Italian. My heart beats when I think of the ceremony. Albertine is happy: she loves him better every day, and my esteem for his character constantly increases.

I will write you Tuesday, after the ceremony. Can anything important happen to me without my associating you with it? Adieu.

In another letter, written some days later, she says:—

"Our wedding went off extremely well, dear Juliette: no ceremony excites such deep emotions, especially with the English liturgy.

"But what is worth more than impressions is, that I am daily becoming more and more attached to M. de Broglie. His whole conduct has been marked by delicacy and true feeling. His character is virtuous; and I bless God and my father, who has obtained for me from this Giver of all good a friend for my daughter so worthy of esteem and affection."

When Mme. de Staël returned to Paris, at the close of 1816, all her friends were frightened by the change in her appearance. She was suffering greatly from debility and want of sleep, and was relieved from pain only by opiates. She lingered throughout the winter, and died on the 14th of July, 1817. Mme. Récamier, who had seen her daily during her illness, was apprised of the sad event by the Duchess de Luynes and the Duke de Laval. The latter gave her the note in which M. Schlegel had announced to Matthieu de Montmorency this irreparable loss:—

M. SCHLEGEL TO M. DE MONTMORENCY.

Sir, — It is my painful duty to inform you, that your illustrious and immortal friend passed away for ever, at five o'clock this morning. If you come to see us, you will find a stricken and disconsolate household. Schlegel.

I will not try to portray Mme. Récamier's grief. With her capacity for loving, death did not weaken the warmth of her attachment. Mme. de Staël now became to her an

object of worship, and she bent all her energies to perpetuate the memory of so dear a friend.[1]

M. de Montmorency's grief for the death of Mme. de Staël was no less profound and lasting. I have found a touching proof of it in the papers that his duchess gave to Mme. Récamier after his death.

MEMORANDA FROM AMONG THE PAPERS OF M. DE MONTMORENCY.

At the Valley, July 14, 1823. Sixth anniversary of the death of Mme. de Staël; summer, in which I have enjoyed all the liberty that my leaving the Ministry, and the journey of Madame, has given me.

She wrote from Sweden to her intimate friend, who is also mine, in speaking of me: "There is no such thing as absence for Christians, because they meet each other in the sentiment of prayer."

She said to her daughter: "The mystery of existence is the connection of our faults with our sorrows. I have never done a wrong thing that has not been the cause of a misfortune."

She wrote in her last work: "Prayer is the life of the soul."

She wrote in the "Ten Years of Exile," in speaking of me: "I never raise my eyes to Heaven without thinking of my friend. I also venture to believe that he responds to me in his prayers."

During the long intervals of sleeplessness in her last illness, she incessantly repeated the Lord's Prayer, to calm herself: she had learnt to enjoy the "Imitation of Jesus Christ."

Mme. Necker says in her interesting notice: "The Supreme Judge will take all into account. He will show clemency toward genius."

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[1] Here follows, in the original, an account of Mme. de Staël's relations with the court of Weimar, and the circumstances which led the grand duke to present to Mme. Récamier a copy of the correspondence between Mme. de Staël and his grandmother, the Grand Duchess Louise; but as the substance of this account is recapitulated in Mme. Lenormant's "Coppet et Weimar," which has already been translated, it is omitted here. — [Ed

CHAPTER VIII.

1818–1820.

Mme. Récamier and M. de Chateaubriand. — Letters of M. Ballanche and of M. de Montmorency. — Sojourn at the Vallée aux Loups. — Note from Mme. de Broglie. — Second reverse of fortune. — Abbaye-aux-Bois. — M. J. J. Ampère. — Delphine Gay. — Miss Berry. — M. de Chateaubriand.

IT was at the bedside of Mme. de Staël that M. de Chateaubriand made the acquaintance of Mme. Récamier; but their friendship did not deepen into intimacy until 1818. The prestige of his spotless and brilliant reputation, his genius, and the fascination of his distinguished manners, speedily conquered for him the first place in her heart, or, at least, in her imagination. Her best friends, such as M. de Ballanche and M. de Montmorency, could not see the rise of this affection without uneasiness. The former, a true poet, whom the Muse could divert or console, proposed to her to translate Petrarch; a work which she began, but never finished. Though he was in Paris, M. Ballanche wrote at this time to Mme. Récamier almost every day, and also dined and passed all his evenings with her.

M. BALLANCHE TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Thursday, 1818.

Yes, I look forward to happy days for you yet; not such as you appear to regret, but days of calm repose and sweet occupations. Poetry and music will throw a charm over the leisure that you will be able to make for yourself. You will become famous in a new way. You will reveal that side of yourself of which the world, as yet, does not dream. It may also be your mission to bring out capabilities in me that are now dormant. With what happiness should I welcome the thought of bequeathing a name to posterity, if it were to you I owed it! I am certain, that, if any masterpiece is hidden in

the silence of my soul, it is you only that can bring it to light. Like you, I need quiet and rest: I need tranquil studies and peaceful leisure. It is you who will procure me all this. Your charming presence, the sweet reflection of your soul, will be a powerful inspiration. You are a complete poem: you are the Muse herself. Your destiny is to inspire; mine, to be inspired. An occupation will do you good: your suffering and dreamy imagination needs nourishment,— something with which to occupy itself. Take care of your health: distrust your nerves. You are an angel that has lost its way in coming to a world of agitation and falsehood. I will write to you daily. You will give me infinite pleasure every time that you can reply to me. I will not talk to you of myself, for you know all my feelings; but you shall be my theme, for I wish, at all events, to make you understand yourself and your capabilities, of which you are still ignorant.

Wednesday.

I have sufficiently urged you to persist in your good resolutions in regard to literary work; only I hope that you will struggle a little longer with the difficulties of Petrarch. Dante and Petrarch are the two veritable monuments of Italy. I say the two veritable monuments, because they must be deciphered and explained. There are secrets to be disclosed in them which are not seen by every one. With a knowledge of the language, one may get to understand Ariosto, Tasso, Métastasio; but that is not enough for Petrach or for Dante. We find in these two poets, besides the Italian, another poetic language, the meaning of which is sometimes obscure to the Italians themselves. The work that I wish you to do for Petrarch has been done for Dante; but no one has dared to wrestle with the difficulties of the former. This work would do you an infinite honor. I go farther: I want you also to write the introduction. I shall reserve for myself only the editing, which, modest as it is, will do me great honor, without speaking even of the portion of glory that will be reflected upon me from such an association with you. No, you do not know yourself: no one knows the extent of his faculties, before having tested them.

Friday.

For fourteen years of my life I was persuaded that I had no real ability; and I not only kept myself back, but I even made no effort to emerge from this nullity. It was not discourage-

ment, but the complete and deep conviction that I wanted the necessary faculties. After "Antigone," I had the same feeling that my poor little career was ended. I believed that I had stumbled on that by an accident. It was a revelation that I had been glad enough to seize, but which I might have allowed to escape me. Now I am ready to fall again into the same state, and you alone can draw me out of it. Study and work weigh upon me: you must accustom me to them. The encouragement that I give you must profit myself also: it is only with you that I can contract the taste for work and study.

How can you expect me to have any confidence in myself, when you have none in yourself, — you, whom I regard as so eminently endowed? There is no surface to my kind of talent: others build a palace on the earth, and this palace is seen from afar; I dig a well, of a sufficiently great depth, but it cannot be seen, except when one comes very near to it. Your domain also lies in the realm of delicate sentiment; but, believe me, you have under your command the genius of music, flowers, imagination, and elegance. Privileged creature, take courage: lift your charming head, and do not fear to try your hand on the golden lyre of the poets. My mission in this world may consist in so working that some trace of your noble existence may remain on earth. Assist me, then, to accomplish my destiny. I regard it as a good thing in itself, that you should be loved and appreciated when you are no more. It would be, indeed, a misfortune, should so excellent and charming a person pass away like a shadow. Of what use are souvenirs, if not to perpetuate the good and the beautiful?

I do not know. but it seems to me, that, at present, I must appear like a man absorbed by one fixed idea. My letters say always the same thing to you. I have, it must be confessed, much trouble in making you agree with me in regard to your own superiority. In the meantime, I have strong faith in the truth of my own convictions on the subject. There are some women who have great power of imagination. others great perceptive faculty, others very delicate wit; but, of all the women who have written, no one has possessed all these different qualities. Sometimes it is judgment that is wanting, sometimes moral depth and breadth; but, in you, thought, taste, and grace will be ever united in one harmonious whole. I am fascinated at the very idea of so perfect a harmony. I want the whole world to know what I so easily divine. It

will be your mission to make the intrinsic character of beauty fully understood, — to show that it is an entirely moral thing: so that, in the future, no doubt as to its being a reflection of the soul can ever arise. This is the explanation of what is immortal in beauty. Had Plato known you, he need not have resorted to so subtile an argument to explain his views on the subject. You would have made him alive to a truth that was always a mystery to him; and thus that rare genius would have had one more title to the admiration of the world.

Under the dominion of the same inquietudes, M. de Montmorency also wrote to Mme. Récamier: —

Monday evening, midnight.

I opened, with great emotion, the note; which is better than such incredible silence, such sudden coldness, which I could not qualify or explain. But why should I tell you all I have felt about it? It seems to me, that it was not an unworthy feeling that made me afraid to provoke an explanation, and be the first to complain. But had I not a right to detest the first-fruits of those evil things I do not wish to characterize, be they coquetry or sensibility? How quickly — I dare to say it — have they made you wrong a true and sincere friend! Those looks yesterday were surely involuntary. They escaped me in consequence of my lively and anxious solicitude, my deep absorption in what interests you. Pardon them, and also those words which it is good in you to dread, and which, I sometimes say to myself, I have no right to utter. But I am wrong: I have the consciousness of having every right, in the name of the purest of sentiments, that of friendship, which would like to be as constant as it is warm, and which only desires your happiness in this world and the next. It may be, that this pure, unchangeable affection is worth far more than all those passing illusions that fascinate you at present.

I accept all the promises that you condescend to make me, if you really wish to fulfil them; but I do not even know how to suspend my friendship. What do you say about having already lost it?

That would cost me, if you absolutely willed it, more than I can tell you. But this sentiment — which, above all others, has the privilege of being constant and invariable — ought not to know such suspensions, such variations, so common in certain fugitive fancies.

I was greatly pained and ashamed to-day at such a sudden change in your manner toward others and myself. Ah!

madame, what rapid progress has the evil — which your most faithful friends have dreaded for your sake — made in a few weeks! Does not this thought frighten you? Ah! turn — there is always time — to Him who gives strength, when one really desires it, to cure all, repair all. God and a generous heart are all-sufficient. I supplicate Him from the bottom of my heart, and by the homage of all my prayers, to sustain and enlighten you, and by His powerful help prevent you from riveting with your own hands an unhappy fetter, from which others will suffer as well as yourself.

The sad and almost severe language of these two devoted friends must not be attributed simply to jealousy. Their anxiety was more noble and disinterested. They both feared that Mme. Récamier's peace of mind would be troubled by contact with so tumultuous a nature. They were frightened at the inequalities of character in a man who, in spite of his success in life, was the victim of the most incredible melancholy. Idolized by his contemporaries, spoiled by enthusiastic women, M. de Chateaubriand had become enamored of himself.

But these clouds did not last long. Mme. Récamier's perfect integrity of heart, remarkable sympathy, and power of self-sacrifice, soon re-established harmony.

M. DE MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

CHÂTEAU DE LA FOREST, July 27.

If we are ever driven to repair our own injustice, to retract and renounce our reproaches, it is when we have received a letter as perfect as yours, *aimable amie*. Mine had scarcely left by the usual courier, when this charming little note arrived. I was instantly seized with remorse, which increased and filled my heart when I read the touching proofs of your friendship, the triumphs of your reason, and all the melancholy thoughts that I have not the courage to reproach you for, when they only cause you to love our poor valley, and accord to me the exclusive privilege of admission and consolation. I am proud of this sweet privilege for friendship's sake, and shall hasten to use it. I sent you word to-day, that I should surely see you on Monday, wherever you are; and I am delighted that it is to be in the Valley. Once more, I beg you to forgive my letter of this morning, but confess that it was very natural. Not a word from you; not a word of what interests me so warmly.

I listened only to my feelings of interest and jealousy, which you will pardon on the score of my friendship. Adieu. Many kind regards, without forgetting Amelia, who, I suppose, shares your retirement. Persevere in your generous resolutions, and address yourself to Him who can strengthen and reward them.

Mme. Récamier passed the autumn of 1818, and all the summer of 1819, in the pleasant retirement of La Vallée-aux-Loups, where, in connection with M. de Montmorency, she had hired a house belonging to M. de Chateaubriand. I have found a passage relating to this arrangement, in a letter of July 19, 1818, from the Duchess de Broglie: —

"I picture to myself your little establishment in the Val-de-Loup as the pleasantest in the world. But when Matthieu's biography is written among the lives of the saints, confess that this *tête-à-tête* with the most beautiful and admired woman of her day will be a droll chapter. 'To the pure, all things are pure,' says St. Paul; and he is right. The world is always just: it divines the recesses of the heart. It exaggerates evil, but it never invents it. Consequently, I think, that, if we lose our reputation, it is our own fault."

Mme. Récamier was so pleased with this residence in the Valley, that she formed the plan of purchasing it in connection with M. de Montmorency. But a second reverse of fortune rendered the plan impracticable.

M. Récamier was again unfortunate in business; and, this time, his wife's fortune, which she had generously but imprudently hazarded in his new speculations, was involved to the amount of a hundred thousand francs. Secure in what she deemed a certain provision for the future, she had, a few months before, bought a house in the Rue d'Anjou, and established herself there with her father, his old friend M. Simonard, M. Récamier, and her young niece. In this house, the first property she had ever owned, and where she had hoped to spend the rest of her life, Mme. Récamier only lived a few months.

This second reverse, coming at a time when she was no longer young, made a very sad impression upon her; but she did not allow herself to be cast down by it. After generously and vainly sacrificing a part of her own for-

tune to save her husband, she felt that she must now take a decided stand, and lead henceforward a separate and personal life. She therefore sought an asylum in the Abbaye-aux-Bois. By thus breaking with the world, and establishing herself in a religious community, she thought herself justified in no longer living in the same house with M. Récamier. With the remainder of her own fortune, she had enough to support him; and she absolutely insisted that he should abandon the speculations that had proved so disastrous. She foresaw and provided for his wants with filial affection, and endeavored to the last to render his life pleasant and comfortable; a result singularly easy to accomplish, on account of the optimism and kindliness of his character.

Mme. Récamier's course of conduct met with the decided approbation of her friends; and, from the very general and flattering attentions paid to her by people of consideration, she had the satisfaction of knowing, that it was universally understood and appreciated. All those attentions, which are usually so unsatisfying, because paid generally to position, rank, or fortune, were in her case an undoubted mark of respect and esteem. Mme. Récamier was as much touched as flattered by them.

From the day, therefore, that she took up her abode at the Abbaye-aux-Bois, she began a new existence which was entirely personal; and still more exceptional, if that were possible, than her former life. The only suite of apartments vacant at that time at the Abbaye was on the third floor. It was small, paved with tiles, and inconvenient. The arrangement was bad, and the stairs difficult of ascent. But Mme. Récamier did not hesitate. She settled the three old men, whose good angel she was, in the neighborhood of the Abbaye; and installed herself in this cell, which everybody else had found uninhabitable. It is thus described by M. de Chateaubriand: —

"The bed-chamber was furnished with a book-case, a harp, a piano, a portrait of Mme. de Staël, and a view of Coppet by moonlight. On the windows were pots of flowers. When, quite breathless from having climbed three flights of stairs, I entered the cell at the approach of evening, I was enchanted.

The windows overlooked the garden of the Abbaye, under the verdant shade of which the nuns paced up and down, and the pupils played. The top of an acacia was on a level with the eye, sharp spires pierced the sky, and in the distance rose the hills of Sèvres. The rays of the setting sun threw a golden light over the landscape, and came in through the open windows. Some birds were settling themselves for the night on the top of the window-blinds. Here I found silence and solitude, far above the tumult and turmoil of a great city."

The arts have perpetuated the memory of this little cell. Déjeunne has made a faithful copy of it; and there is also in existence a water-color drawing, by M. Delécluze, the clever art-critic of the "Journal des Débats."

In the last thirty years, the Abbaye-aux-Bois has acquired great notoriety: everybody is acquainted now with its locality; but in 1819 it was so little known, at least to fashionable people, that Mme. Moreau, when she paid her first visit to Mme. Récamier, thought it necessary to arrange her dinner for an hour later, in order to make the trip to a place so remote. Society very soon, however, learnt the way; and, as fashion is mixed up with every thing in this country, it soon became the fashion to be admitted to the cell in the Abbaye-aux-Bois.

But, if society came to seek her, the courageous recluse constantly refused to go to any evening assembly. She went occasionally, but very seldom, to the theatre,—generally to hear music. She saw Talma several times, and was present at the début of Mlle. Rachel. With these rare exceptions, Mme. Récamier never went out but in the morning.

At dinner, all her family were assembled about her; that is to say, her niece, MM. Bernard and Récamier, their old friend M. Simonard, M. Ballanche, and M. Paul David, nephew of M. Récamier.

The first dinner at the Abbaye was fearfully sad; and, like shipwrecked people after a tempest, the little colony could only regard the sky and the future with affright. Mme. Récamier, though she was not less affected, tried, and not unsuccessfully, to revive the drooping spirits of her family. After dinner, some faithful friends dropped

in; and the evening ended, as every evening did, in the late arrival of M. de Montmorency.

At the end of six months, Mme. Récamier removed to a large suite of rooms on the first floor of the Abbaye, which the nuns ceded to her for life. She was now much more comfortable, and able to surround herself with objects that recalled the friends she had lost. She placed, in the large reception-room, the picture of Corinne, the portrait of Mme. de Staël, and later that of M. de Chateaubriand, by Girodet.

Among the old friends who came to see Mme. Récamier here were the Duchess of Devonshire, her brother the Earl of Bristol, the Duke of Hamilton, Lady Davy and her illustrious husband, Sir Humphrey, with whom she had ascended Mount Vesuvius, Miss Maria Edgeworth, and Alexander Humboldt. Each year brought also newcomers in a circle constantly recruited by distinguished persons of all parties and ranks. M. de Kératry, M. Dubois (of the "Globe"), Eugène Delacroix, David d'Angers, Augustin Périer, M. Bertin, sen., were found there, along with M. de Chateaubriand and Benjamin Constant; as, later, were M. Villemain, Count de Montalembert, Baron Pasquier, Augustin Thierry, Henri Delatouche, and M. Merimée.

M. J. J. Ampère, one of the younger members of this circle, was presented to Mme. Récamier in 1821 by his father, the eminent geometrician, the compatriot and dearest friend of M. Ballanche. M. J. J. Ampère was then twenty-one years of age. The universality of his tastes, the insatiable curiosity of his mind, his quick and close perception, his attractive manner of explaining the most opposite scientific theories, whether philological or historic, were his most striking characteristics. The ardor and noble enthusiasm of this young man, together with his broad human sympathies, and tenderness for his father, of whom he was justly proud, made him singularly attractive. Mme. Récamier soon became truly attached to him; and in her heart and at her fireside he had the place of a friend, whose success and career never ceased to excite her warm interest. I am certain that I shall meet with no

contradiction from him, if I recall all that M. Ampère has owed to her counsels and friendship.[1]

It was at the Abbaye-aux-Bois that M. Lamartine's "Meditations" were read and admired, before they were given to the public. Delphine Gay recited her first verses there. I have a distinct recollection of that occasion. The circle was large. Matthieu de Montmorency, Mme. Moreau, Prince Tufiakin, the Queen of Sweden, M. de Catellan, M. de Forbin, Pascal Grandmaison,[2] Baour-Lormian,[3] MM. Ampère, de Gerando, Ballanche, Gérard, and many others were present.

Among the subjects of conversation successively discussed was a new little poem, full of pathos, a masterpiece in its way, "La Pauvre Fille," by Soumet. Mme. Récamier requested Delphine Gay, seated near her mother, to be kind enough to recite it for the benefit of those to whom the poem was unknown. She complied with so much grace, justness of emphasis, and true and deep feeling, that her auditors were charmed. Mme. Gay, delighted with her daughter's success, leant toward the mistress of the house, and said to her in a low voice, "Ask Delphine to repeat to you something of her own."

The young lady made a sign of refusal: the mother insisted. Mme. Récamier, who had not the slightest idea of Mlle.'s Gay's talents, feared to press her, lest she might

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[1] A writer in "Fraser's Magazine" gives the following account of M. Ampère's devotion to his friend: —

"I shall never forget the sort of consternation, mingled with sorrow, which this death caused [the death of M. Ballanche]. Everybody felt regret for so pure and excellent a man, but yet more of grief and pity for Mme Récamier, whose loss was felt to be overwhelming and entirely irreparable. I had happened to hear that M. Ampère, whom I knew to have been for some time suffering from the effects of his dangerous illness in Egypt, was going to recruit his shattered health in the Pyrenees. He was to accompany M Cousin, and the day of their departure was fixed. Two or three days after the death of M. Ballanche, I went to the Abbaye-aux-Bois to inquire for Mme. Récamier. M. Ampère, who had instantly taken, as far as it was possible, the place of his venerable and lamented friend, came out to speak to me. After talking of her and her unutterable loss, I said, 'And you? You will be obliged to give up your journey.' — 'Oh!' said he, '*je n'y pensais plus.*' The demands and perils of his own health were utterly forgotten." — Ed.

[2] Of the French Academy, author of a poem on Philip Augustus.

[3] Of the French Academy, author of a translation of Tasso.

lay herself open to unfriendly criticism; but, Mme. Gay still persisting, all the others joined in with their persuasions. The young poet then rose, and recited in a charming manner the verses on the Sisters of St. Camille, which afterward received the prize from the French Academy. Delphine Gay was tall, fresh, and fair as a Hebe. Her erect figure was then very sylph-like, her features were strongly marked, and, later in life, her profile inclined to the large Roman type; but, at this period, the grace of youth threw a charm over her whole person. It was remarked, how pretty she grew whilst reciting her verses, and how much harmony there was between her gestures and the inflections of her voice.

I have still another anecdote of those first years at the Abbaye. Miss Berry was in Paris, — an Englishwoman, no longer young, but still beautiful and *spirituelle*. She was very amusing, unaffected, and kind, with a great flow of spirits. Miss Berry owed the celebrity which she enjoyed in England to the affection which she had inspired, when almost a child, in Horace Walpole, — then an old man. Horace Walpole had a great fear of ridicule; yet it was his fate to awaken, when young, a passionate regard in a very old woman, Mme. de Deffand; and, in his turn, he conceived a deep and romantic attachment for a mere girl. He bequeathed to Miss Berry all his papers and a part of his fortune. She never married, and lived to be over ninety, the object of consideration and respect.

Miss Berry was a frequent visitor at the Abbaye. Coming there one evening, and finding Mme. Récamier and her niece alone, she began laughingly to relate an adventure that had happened that very day: —

Between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, at nightfall, — for it was the middle of January, — she paid a visit to Lady Charles Stuart, the wife of the English Ambassador at Paris. They talked by the corner of the fire, without lights. Lady Stuart was expecting a governess, who had been recommended to her. The door opened: some name was pronounced by an English servant; and a woman of middle height, rather stout, and simply dressed, crept quietly into the drawing-room. Lady Stuart, mis-

taking her for the person she expected, motioned her to a chair; and, with all the politeness of a well-bred person who knows how to give every one his due, addressed some questions to the supposed governess.

The lady, who was no other than the Queen of Sweden, perceived that there was some mistake; and, to put an end to it, said promptly, "It is extremely cold: the king, my husband, tells me. . . ."

Lady Stuart was confounded, and Miss Berry amused.

While she was telling us this story, the door opened (no one was announced at Mme. Récamier's); and a lady, short and stout, approached her.

The laughing and *spirituelle* Englishwoman continued to amuse herself with her story, and repeated, "It was the Queen of Sweden, do you understand?" In vain did Mme. Récamier say to her, "For mercy's sake, be still. This is the queen herself." Miss Berry only laughed the more. "Charming! charming!" she cried. "You want to make the story complete by persuading me it is the queen." It was extremely difficult to get her serious, and make her comprehend that she was really in the presence of the Queen of Sweden. Fortunately Her Majesty, as amiable as modest, was not offended.

But the most important person in Mme. Récamier's circle of friends at the Abbaye was M. de Chateaubriand. There, as elsewhere, he was the controlling spirit. With that self-abnegation which Mme. Récamier manifested in all her friendships, and more particularly in that with Mme. de Staël, her devotion to M. de Chateaubriand can easily be understood. All her interests became centred in him, while his restless, melancholy nature, and the vicissitudes of his career, kept her in a constant state of anxiety and perplexity. It must be admitted that Mme. Récamier's enthusiastic friendship for M. de Chateaubriand often greatly disturbed her tranquillity. It was the one aim of her life to appease the irritability, soothe the susceptibilities, and remove the annoyances of this noble, generous, but selfish nature, spoiled by too much adulation.

But this beneficent mission was only fulfilled at the cost of peace of mind, and in this respect the fears of M. de

Montmorency and Ballanche were too well justified. Still the persistency and fidelity of so pure and true an affection finished by conquering M. de Chateaubriand. The tone of his letters gradually changes. His respect and veneration increase with the depth of his affection. His self-absorption grows less; and we feel that he is telling the truth when he writes to her, "You have transformed my nature."

Owing to this new friendship, Mme. Récamier took a more lively interest than formerly in the march of events; and now that we have reached this period of her life, I shall be able to give more regularity to these memoirs.

CHAPTER IX.

1820–1822.

M. de Chateaubriand appointed Minister to Berlin. — His letters. — His departure. — His letters from Berlin. — Return of M. de Chateaubriand to Paris. — M. de Montmorency made Minister of Foreign Affairs. — Departure of M. de Chateaubriand as Ambassador to London. — His letters. — Letter of M. de Chateaubriand to M. de Montmorency.

IMPORTANT occurrences had modified the policy of Louis XVIII. The assassination of the Duke de Berry brought on the fall of M. de Descazes, whereupon M. de Chateaubriand's friends came into power. He had contributed too largely to the success of these friends to be left outside by them; yet the king's dislike to him was so strong, that it was not possible to give him a seat in the cabinet. They therefore tried to procure for him an embassy to Berlin. And now begin the almost daily confidences of M. de Chateaubriand: —

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

November, 1820, Wednesday morning.

Look at the "Quotidienne," which speaks of my departure for Berlin. These repeated insinuations are going to bring on a crisis very soon. So much the better: this ought to come to an end.

Friday morning.

Mme. de Chateaubriand is opposed to it. She says that she thought she should die at Brussels and Ghent; that I myself have been extremely ill there; and that, if we must be exiled, at least the exile ought to be agreeable. I do not think it impossible, however, to bring her round; but then it is our friends who ought to charge themselves with this task. As for me, I cannot help it; and I do not even wish to insist, since another destiny than mine is involved. You perceive that I am not eager for the plan; but I will do what my wife and friends wish. There is one point upon which I am firm. I wish, if

the thing takes place, that the title of Minister of State[1] should be given me on the same day as the embassy; and that the two orders should appear together in the "Moniteur." I consider my honor involved in this. I do not ask to have the title of Minister of State given me first, which ought to be done (I feel that the reparation would embarrass the Ministers); but I demand that both shall come together, because I have the right to wish that the Minister of State shall not be a *consequence* of the embassy, but simply an act of restitution. I have duly reflected upon what you have said to me, if I should refuse all; but the more I think about it, the less I fear. I find my present position excellent. I am very willing never to be any thing else than what I am. I demand nothing; I solicit nothing. I do not wish to put either passion, pride, or a desire to make trouble, into my refusal; but I shall feel a true joy when I am considered good for nothing, and am let alone. This is a long discussion: pray, excuse it.

Friday morning.

How have you passed the night? Are you still ill? How I wish I could know all about it! I will come at four o'clock to find out. I hope you are as pleased as I am with our plan for this summer. Now that this confounded embassy has fallen to the ground, I feel relieved of a mountain's weight. I have Mme. de Chateaubriand on my side now, because she saw M. de Serre yesterday on some business of the Infirmary,[2] and she is very much dissatisfied about it, so much so that she says that all the Ministers are "liars, beggars, and scoundrels!" I defend the Ministers, and maintain that there is some good in them, which puts her in a still greater fury. Yet see what I am with you. I only exist in the thought of never leaving you whilst I live. Good-bye until four o'clock.

Monday morning.

You saw Matthieu de Montmorency last evening, and he has told you that nothing is decided yet. I am dying of impatience. The Chamber of Peers sits to-day. I do not know when we will get through. I am afraid I shall not see you until half-past five, and yet this is my only earthly pleasure.

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[1] Chateaubriand's name was struck off the list of Ministers of State in 1816, and the pension attached to the place was taken from him; his pamphlet, "Monarchy according to the Charter," having displeased the Government. — Ed.

[2] The Infirmary of Maria-Theresa, which Mme. de Chateaubriand had established.

PARIS, Dec. 21, 1820, half-past eleven o'clock.

All is finished. I have accepted according to your orders. I am going to Berlin. I have been promised the Minister of State. Sleep, therefore. At any rate, the torments of uncertainty are over. To-morrow morning —

Friday.

It is all settled. Monsieur himself told me yesterday, that I shall be absent only a few months. Matthieu said the same thing to me. Be tranquil, then. I will pass my life near you, to love you; and this short absence will leave us without care for the future.

I will be with you between four and five o'clock, and perhaps sooner.

Saturday morning.

Corbière came to say good-bye yesterday evening. He stayed so late, and had so many disturbing things to talk about, I could not write to you. I am troubled, thinking that you will be vexed; and the fear of this prevented me from sleeping. I will see you this evening between eight and nine o'clock. You alone fill my life; and, when I enter your little cell, I forget all my trials. The finery has turned Mme. de Chateaubriand's brain. She revels in happiness; but the shape of the hat is too narrow: we will change it.

The new ambassador left Paris, Jan. 1.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

MAYENCE, Jan. 6, 1821.

I arrived here yesterday evening. I fear I shall be delayed some days by the Rhine, the passage of which is not practicable at this moment. I have employed a part of the morning in exploring the city. It is worth the trouble from its associations and Gothic antiquities. But Epiphany has been a melancholy day for me, alone and far from what is dear to me. When shall I end my wanderings on earth? I am like the old traveller Jacob. "Few and evil have my days been, and not equal to those of my fathers." One thing only has given me great pleasure, — the beautiful chanting that I heard this morning, in an old church, at mass. Some old German women, in large, flowered calico mantles, and a few soldiers, sang a great deal better than our beautiful ladies in the salons of Paris

Moreover, this whole country seems to me to be slandered. I have found well-managed post-stations and excellent inns. It is true that France extends as far as here. We shall see when we get the other side of the Rhine. The Germans had better build bridges across it; because, in the present state of manners, this river is less a defence in time of war than a barrier to civilization. It is always well to begin, like the Thracians, with Orpheus; and the rest will come afterward.

If I cross this evening, I will inform you of it before closing this letter. Do not forget to tease our friends for my recall. I wish I were already at Berlin: half of the road would be accomplished.

I am starting; and am to cross the Rhine four leagues off, at Oppenheim. I sleep at Frankfort. I will write you better there: here I have no conveniences.

BERLIN, Saturday, Jan. 13, 1821.

I arrived here Tuesday morning. I was sorry not to be able to write you as fully on the route as I wished. The fear that the king might have left for Laybach made me hasten on, and left me not a moment's time. I was travelling the last four nights. Now I have arrived in the midst of the Carnival. When that is over, all relapses into quiet again; and, as I am very unwell, I shall take no part even in these passing pleasures.

I await the promises of my friends; and I count upon you to make them fulfil them. However, if they break their word, I shall quickly come to a decision.

I am much afraid that I shall be of little use here. There is nothing going on. I wrote yesterday my first official letter. You can imagine how impatient I am to hear from you. I fancy strange things. Here am I in the shade: so much the better, if they have many men who can serve them better than I.

I have not yet seen M. Alopéus,[1] to whom I carried your letter. He gives this evening a grand fête. All the royal family are to be present; but I cannot go, because I have not yet seen the king. I shall be presented to him either Monday or Tuesday. I am going to write to Matthieu. The courier has arrived; but he left on the 2d instant, the day after my departure, and he has brought me nothing from you.

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[1] Russian Ambassador at Berlin, whom Mme. Récamier had known, in 1818, at Aix-la-Chapelle.

BERLIN, Jan. 20, 1821.

At last I have received a few lines from you. How far you are from the truth! I assure you, without any of my *modest speeches*, that this revolution which you anticipate is a chimera. If it be true that no one is a prophet in his own country, it is also true that no one is well appreciated, but in his own country. Doubtless they know who I am; but the nature of the people is cold: what we call enthusiasm is unknown. They have read my works, esteem them more or less, look at me a moment with a very tranquil curiosity; and have no wish to talk with me, or to know me better. M. d'Alopéus will tell you the same thing. It is the simple truth; and I again assure you that this suits me every way. There is no society here outside of the grand Carnival re-unions, which end at the commencement of Lent, when every body lives in the greatest retirement. The Diplomatic Corps are not received anywhere; and I might be Racine and Bossuet, and nobody would care. If I have been somewhat distinguished, it has been by the royal family, who are charming, and have overwhelmed me with kindness and respect. At a grand fête at the English Minister's on Tuesday, I had the honor to be chosen for a partner in the Polonaise by the Grand Duchess Nicholas, the king's favorite daughter, and by her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cumberland. Yesterday, I had a long conversation with the Grand Duke Nicholas. Now, here you have the whole story of my honors and way of life. Every day I walk alone in the park, — a large piece of wood at the gate of Berlin; and, when there are no dinners or re-unions, I go to bed at nine o'clock. I have no other resource except conversation with Hyacinth.[1] We discuss current literature. What else can I tell you? I am upon my third diplomatic despatch. Try to find out through Matthieu if it gives satisfaction. My recall is certain in April; but you must press it. I have not ceased to write you by every courier. This is my third letter from Berlin. The first two I sent you by my good Lemoine. I directed them simply to you.

The four small lines were a perfect success. They were not at all visible, and were brought out by the fire like enchantment. You will see that all my predictions will come to pass. I shall return in the spring, and you will find me just as devoted.

BERLIN, Jan. 23, 1821.

Since I have been gone, I have only received one letter from you; . . . but of what use are complaints? Let us drop the past, and talk of the future.

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[1] Hyacinth Pilorge, his secretary, who was wholly devoted to him.

While I am writing to you, the affair of Laybach must be determined, and they must have decided affirmatively or negatively the question of my journey in the suite of the king. If the journey does not take place, interest yourself in my recall. Time passes: it will already be February when you get this letter. I am absolutely powerless. The climate is very bad for me. Every thing is, and always will be, the same as I wrote you in my last, — the same favor at court, the same kindness outside of it; nothing more. Except the assembly days, which as a diplomat I am obliged to attend, I live in the most profound solitude; and, as I am ill, I cannot even work. Besides, I already know my business, and I assure you it is an easy thing; I know thirty simpletons who would make excellent ambassadors. My regards and remembrances to Matthieu. Mme. de Chateaubriand complains, that she sees none of my *pretended* friends, — that is her word, — while the little opposition (*la petite opposition*) takes care of her, and does not leave her. It is a blunder and a piece of ingratitude on the part of our friends; but I expected it. I hope to get a letter from you to-morrow.

BERLIN, Feb. 10, 1821.

Now I am forced to consider you thoughtless and a little *stupid*. I received this morning your No. 5 (it is always an unlucky number). In this No. 5, you scold on one page, and make amends on another, because you have just got a letter from me; and then you say that you cannot read it all. Yet my writing is beautiful, as you see; and, though my last ink was pale, you ought to be able with your beautiful and kind eyes to read me marvellously well. You tell me that you have received a letter from me; but you do not say of what date, so that I cannot know whether one has miscarried. This is another plague. I repeat it again, for the last time, that I have written to you, and will continue to write to you, by each courier. Including my letter of to-day, Feb. 10, I have written you ten letters from Berlin: could you do as well?

To change the subject, I have just written warmly to the Minister about that piece of chicanery of which you spoke to me, as well as my other friends. I have not written a word to Prince de Hardenberg, and I do not know what this quibbling means. I have enough to bear. They have not kept one of their promises to me. They have done nothing for the Royalists. They would not send me to Laybach, where our great diplomats have done splendidly; and the order of Minister of State, that was to follow me here, has lost itself

on the way. As all the loyalty has been on my side, as I have made all the personal sacrifices, and brought the Royalists into the Ministry, I am in the most noble position to retire. All the Royalists, and even all the Liberals, call me. Let them annoy me again, and you will see me a fortnight afterwards. I am also very anxious about Mme. de Chateaubriand: she has just told me, in a very sad letter, that she is ill. She is still so, perhaps. Ah! it is only good to live in one's country, in the midst of one's friends. If I am any thing, an embassy adds nothing to my reputation.

BERLIN, Feb. 20, 1821.

You are going to Angervilliers; — and my poor letters! I have too much accustomed you to them; and they are no longer of importance to you. I think I shall have to discontinue them, since you treat them with so much indifference. What do you think about it? The hymn of M. d'Alopéus is a compliment to you and to my friends, — nothing else. They treat me very kindly here; but "admiration" puts no one "at my feet." I do not ask it: I do not deserve it; and I am treated as I like to be treated, for I am a good-natured fellow. I am perfectly tranquil; for my mind is made up. Whether I have *congé* or no, I shall see you in the spring. The rest is of little importance to me. I have sent you another letter for Matthieu. I am afraid that it will arrive during your stay at Angervilliers: it is quite pressing. I am having a quarrel.[1]

I do not know whether they are satisfied with my despatches, but I myself am very much so. This is not vanity, but a proper pride; for in these despatches I have not ceased to uphold the liberties of the European nations and of France, and to express invariably the opinions with which you are acquainted. Would the Liberals be as frank? I doubt it.

I ought to have insisted upon going to Laybach, as a matter of honor, and because I was promised it; but it was my good star that prevented me from making that journey. I must tell you a piece of success. I wrote certain things, and blamed certain men, in a despatch relating to that congress; and it seems that in the council they have also been dissatisfied with them. Will they think better of my policy for it? Not much.

I am expecting a letter from you very shortly.

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[1] With the Ministry.

BERLIN, Feb. 27, 1821.

At last, a nice letter, written on the four sides, and down to the bottom! You are not willing to give me any credit on the score of virtue; but I thought that a profound, sincere, constant attachment was a virtue. I am having a grand quarrel. You know all. I have received a sharp reply to a very frank postscript of which I sent a copy to Matthieu in a letter inclosed to you. That letter will arrive whilst you are still in the country, and that will occasion some delay. It is quite clear that we shall quarrel. We agree in nothing: I have some virtue in politics; I desire public liberty, a noble and generous system, independent sentiments, hand in hand with fidelity to the throne, — things displeasing to some, and not to the taste of others. Add to this, all the words that they have violated, all the promises they have made to me, which they have broken.

The *congé* I will have; for I am my own master, and Mme. de Chateaubriand wrote me yesterday, that she left me free to resume my independence, if I judged proper. I will act with moderation and judgment. I will disturb nothing, unless they refuse me every thing. Matthieu thinks that I should not demand a *congé* at this moment. He is right; but we must take into consideration the time it takes for the couriers to carry the letters to and fro. To get the *congé* by the 15th of April or the 1st of May, it must be applied for by the 20th of March, at the latest. Make Matthieu understand this. He must be very much startled at my quarrel.

In your No. 8, from Angervilliers, 14th February, you say that you are to remain eight days longer in the country. Consequently you will have been in Paris eight days, when you get this letter. Tell me once more, if you wrote to me at Frankfort. We are in the last days of the Carnival here, — after that silence and solitude, which suit me.

BERLIN, March 3, 1821.

We are approaching the *dénouement*. The fifteenth of this month, I am going to ask a *congé* for the 15th of April or the 1st of May. If they refuse it to me, I shall send in my resignation, along with my reasons. I have received a letter from Villèle, — very sad, and desponding. He has made, in my opinion, great mistakes, especially in not pronouncing for my system of *the Charter and honest men;* in not declaring himself, at once, for the public liberties and against the wrong-doers of the Revolution: but, as I am, like Don Quixote, a man for the right, I have taken the part of Villèle, in a letter I have

written to Fiéveé about his book, which he sent to me. You see what I get for this honesty. I am going to reply to Villèle, and say to him, that he is the one to get the *congé* for me. Still, as my mind is made up, let them do as they choose. More for their own sake than for mine, I hope that all will go on politely, graciously, without noise or rupture.

I have seen at Prince Augustus's the sketch of a lady called "The Exile," taken from your portrait. It is not you; but it is enough like you to make me indulge in sad reflections upon exile.

BERLIN, March 10, 1821.

Your letter troubles me, telling me that you are ill. I suppose that you are now in Paris, at which I rejoice; because it seems to me that you are then nearer me.

We are approaching the *dénouement*. It is quite singular that Matthieu should speak of the irritation of certain men, when I talk to them as I ought to talk to them. Does he think that I am going to bear every thing? I have need of nobody: they have need of me. It is necessary that I should remember what I am, when they forget it. It would be entirely too much, when they have deceived me grossly, that I should still be the very humble servant of these gentlemen. My enemies are very mean, my friends very feeble. It is possible that at the end of the month I shall decide to send Hyacinth to Paris: then all will be better, and more clearly explained.

I am waiting with impatience for a letter from you, to tell me you are no longer ill. I am very glad that my punctuality proves to you, at least, that I am a man of my word, and a faithful friend.

BERLIN, March 17, 1821.

You scold, and you are wrong; and my letters prove it. I have received all of yours, and I thank you for them. It is my only pleasure in my exile. I have also heard officially, that they are content with my last despatches; but it will be, as usual, a contentment that will bear no fruit. I expect nothing, ask for nothing, except the *congé*. I have not yet asked for it officially, because I want to wait for the news of the entry of the Austrians into Naples. I shall then hurry off Hyacinth, unless, as I have already said, the thing is decided in my favor by the influence of my friends, which is not probable. If you arrived on the 7th in Paris, as you planned, and wrote to me on the 8th, 9th, or even on the morning of the

10th, I shall receive your letter on Sunday, by the next courier. It is already the 17th of March! Time passes quickly; however, I find it very tedious. M. d'Alopéus always talks to me of you. Send him some pleasant message through me.

BERLIN, March 20, 1821.

To avoid writing you about politics, I enclose the letter for Matthieu unsealed. You can read it or not as you please; but you will find there the explanation of that silly notion, that I intended to return without leave. Truly, I should not have thought that my friends could be such fools, or that they considered me so crazy.

You say that I do not tell you of my successes. Here is one. A Moravian preacher gave a most pompous eulogy of me last Sunday, in the pulpit. What do you think? He contrasted me with Voltaire, who also lived in this country; he to corrupt it, I to repair the evil he had done.

I have told you a hundred times, that I read you perfectly, in spite of your fine writing. Give yourself, therefore, no uneasiness on that score.

You cannot imagine my joy at learning that you are again in your little cell. Before two months are over, I shall see you. This thought restores me to life and courage.

BERLIN, March 26, 1821.

I have thrown down the gauntlet. Enclosed is a letter that you will send immediately to Matthieu, in which I request him formally to demand a *congé*. After the news I have received by express of the affair at Turin,[1] I am resolved to act. It is of the utmost importance, that, in such serious circumstances, I should go to Paris for instructions. I hope they will comply with my request; for they are pleased with my despatches, and they also need to consult with me. In any case, if my friends refuse to ask for it, or the Ministry refuses the demand, as I have told you, my course is settled. I must stop: to-day I have a long and important despatch to write.

If they had listened to me on the Congress of Laybach, they would not be in this predicament. Of what use is it to praise my despatches, if they do not follow my advice?

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[1] Conspiracy of the Piedmontese Carbonari, February, 1821.

BERLIN, March 27, 1821.

Mme. de Chateaubriand conducts matters promptly. She asked M. Pasquier[1] herself for the *congé;* and, what is stranger still, she obtained the promise of it immediately. So I am to see you again. I am going to write M. Pasquier to-day to fix the time. I shall ask it for the 20th of April, with the reservation, that, if the service of the king require, I shall not use it until the 1st of May. I do not speak to you of politics. I know all about the Italian affair. I am going to write to Matthieu, and tell him that Mme. de Chateaubriand has forestalled the request that I commissioned him to make. I am distressed about the illness of De Fontanes.[2] I dread the arrival of the next courier. I loved Fontanes dearly. He looked as though he would survive me many years. How short life is! and how fast it goes!

BERLIN, April 3, 1821.

No letters from you by yesterday's courier. I will not follow your example. I make no reproaches, but I suffer. I told you in my last letters, that I hoped to get a *congé* for the 20th of April. I am expecting it. If it comes, I will be with you by the end of a month. That seems to me like a dream.

I hear nothing more from Matthieu or from Jules;[3] but I am going to meet them very soon, when all will be explained.

So your Liberals have been odiously triumphant, have they? They grossly deceive themselves. After that, it will be painful for them to see what is passing in Italy. How could they ever have relied upon heroic Naples! Poor people! What stupidity also on our side! What weakness! What pusillanimity at the appearance of danger! We must get rid of all that.

I am still grieving over the death of my poor friend. He was the last literary genius that France possessed. Now, there is nobody left; but I am certain that Fontanes is entirely forgotten by this time, and that I seem to be talking foolishly in speaking to you of him. What folly not to live for one's self, when life is so short!

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[1] Minister of Foreign Affairs.

[2] A poet and elegant prose-writer, Member of the French Academy, and a devoted friend of M. de Chateaubriand.

[3] Prince de Polignac.

BERLIN, April 7, 1821.

I should be a little uneasy, if I did not know your faulty memory. The letter that I received yesterday you call No. 15. Now, I have only had twelve. This would imply the loss of two; but as in No. 15 you confess that you have received five letters from me without replying, except by "a few lines," it is probable the calculation is not correct, and you have made a mistake.

So your Liberals say, do they, that it was impossible to go to Naples? The fools! They want to make Spartans out of those lazzaroni. Your friends have lost the cause of liberty by their follies and by the crimes of the Revolutionists. Their cause is ruined in Europe, — that is, for fifty years. We shall be gone then. My *poor* friends are very *poor:* danger depresses them; but, at the least success, they are very brave. This is by unsteadiness and thoughtlessness.

I am expecting the *congé*, almost without believing in it. But what matter, since my mind is made up? I am perfectly calm. So the Duke de Bordeaux is to be baptized. The occasion is a fine one for the Ministry of State: that is all they think of. Well, it is all the same to me. I have received a very friendly letter from Villèle. All the letters I get urgently press me to return, and advise me to abandon every thing. You will get this by the 16th or 17th, and do not write again after you receive it. I will come in person to get your answer.

Who has made you so unhappy? You do not wish to tell me: can it be some remark, some story?[1] Treat it with scorn.

— —

BERLIN, April 14, 1821.

I have received the two little missing letters, Nos. 13 and 14. They are of old date; one the 15th, the other 22d of March. They have been evidently retained; more particularly No. 13, which is tolerably indiscreet with regard to your friends

[1] Mme. Lernormant says in a note: "This probably alludes to the Duchess of Cumberland;" and refers to "Memoirs d'Outre Tombe," vol. vii. p. 321, where occurs this passage: —

"The Duchess of Cumberland took, almost every day, the same walk as myself. Sometimes she was returning from a charitable visit to the cottage of a poor woman of Spandau; sometimes she stopped, and said graciously to me, that she had hoped to meet me. I visited her frequently. She often said to me, that she would like to confide to me her son, the little George, the prince whom, it was said, his cousin Victoria desired to place by her side on the throne of England."

Chateaubriand afterward corresponded with the Duchess, and, in his Memoirs, gives extracts of an affectionate character from her letters. — ED.

the Liberals. You name Benjamin[1] in all your letters, and say that he told you six weeks ago, that Piedmont was going to rise. I can well believe it. He was a prophet, to be sure! The Prince de La C—— was in Paris, where he had all his proclamations printed, and managed the whole affair. He saw Benjamin & Company; and this valiant conspirator, this prince, who desired the independence of Italy, has been the first to fly, and leave in the lurch those whom he had seduced, even when they had not dispersed, and were still fighting. All this is an abominable piece of rascality, and the Liberals are henceforward disgraced. The independence of Italy may be a generous dream, but it is a dream; and I do not see that the Italians will gain any thing by falling under the sovereign poignard of a Carbonari. The weapon of liberty is not a poignard, but a sword. Military virtues, which often oppress liberty, are nevertheless necessary for its defence; and it is only a sanctimonious fellow like Benjamin, or a fool like the noble peer who opens the door for you,[2] who could have counted on the exploits of the Lacedemonian Punch. What have your incorrigible friends done? They have brought a hundred and twenty thousand Austrians and a hundred thousand Russians into the country that they professed to deliver; that is to say, given it up to all the horrors of a revolution. Have faith in me: see whether I have ever deceived you; whether I have not constantly told you, that all this noise amounted to nothing, when, even at Paris, all seemed lost to my poor friends. Ah! they are very poor, I confess, very weak; but at least they are honest men.

What a terrible political letter! I have written it in a rage.

BERLIN, April 17, 1821.

I have received my *congé*. I shall start the end of the week, and shall see you at the end of another, a few days after this note reaches you; which is the last I shall write you from here. It is like a dream. I can scarcely believe it; yet how often have I said the same thing to you! Will Matthieu be very glad to see me? I doubt it.

M. de Chateaubriand returned to France in the spring of 1821. In the autumn, a change of ministry brought the Royalists fully into power. M. de Villèle took the Treasury; M. Corbière, the Interior; M. de Peyronnet, Justice; and Matthieu de Montmorency, Foreign Affairs.

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[1] Benjamin Constant. [2] Marquis de Catellan.

In January, M. de Chateaubriand was appointed Ambassador to London, in the place of the Duke de Descazes. He left for his post, the 2d of April, 1822.

VISCOUNT DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Tuesday morning, April 2.

You will get these few lines, as usual, as soon as you awake. You will see that nothing will be changed, if you yourself do not change. I am to start immediately. It is half-past eight. Good-bye for the present. I will write from Calais.

Calais, Wednesday, April 3.

Here I am at Calais. To-morrow I shall be at Dover. You know my regularity: you know that I keep my word, and that I have never disappointed anybody. These few lines, simply dropped into the post, will reach you quickly, whereas at Berlin it was an eternity before one heard from one's friends. I will write to you from Dover, and then from London, through M. Lemoine.

Dover, Friday.

You perceive that I have crossed the sea. To-night I shall be in London. I cannot be in this country again, where as a young man I was so unhappy, without painful emotions.

London, Tuesday, April 9, 1822.

I long to receive a line from you. I wrote to you from Calais and Dover. Now I am in London, where I am oppressed with sad recollections, and very lonely, whatever you may think or say. I cannot go anywhere here without seeing something that recalls to me my youth and my sufferings, the friends that I have lost, the people that have passed away, the hopes that I cherished, my first works, my dreams of glory, — every thing in fact involved in the future of a young man who feels himself born for some purpose. I have grasped some few of my chimeras, others have escaped me, and none of them have been worth what they cost. One thing is left to me; and, while I retain that, I shall be consoled for my grey hairs, and all my failures on the long road I have been travelling for thirty years.

I can tell you nothing of society or of politics, for, as yet, I know nothing. I have seen nobody; and I am in the midst

of confusion in a house they are painting and furnishing. I am a little annoyed by the paint, smut, and fog.

I am expecting a note from you. You write very briefly. Give me all the news you can, however. They are talking here strongly of war and Congress. You see that I am just as exact as I was in Berlin. Be assured, also, that all will turn out as I have said.

LONDON, April 12, 1822.

Since I left Paris, I have not had a line from you. I have written to you constantly, and you must have received all my letters. M. Lemoine has carried you the last. You must send your letters before one o'clock, on Mondays and Thursdays, to Matthieu; but perhaps you do not wish to forward them through him. In that case, you can simply post them; but remember that you must prepay them as far as Calais.

I am deep in affairs. I have seen Lord Londonderry, and have given Matthieu the particulars of the important conversation I had with him. I am to be presented to the king on the 19th. In the midst of it all, I am very melancholy. I hear nothing from you: I do not know what has become of my friends, — what they are doing. Alas! it is too true that there is happiness only in an independent life, and with those we love. Write to me. You are very culpable, and have much to retrieve.

LONDON, April 16, 1822.

At last, a note from you. You have received those I wrote you from Calais and Dover. Those I wrote to you from London, you will no doubt also get through that kind M. Lemoine. You see that I am as exact as ever, and that I never break my word. I have just written to M. de Montmorency. I am not surprised at what has been told him. Mischief-makers are very common. I hope that he will be satisfied with my letter.

With regard to the news of the day, I think just the same as I did at Berlin. Your friends, the Liberals, are having only a delusive joy. We will beat them; and our triumph is certain, if we have no divisions among ourselves.

I begin to perceive symptoms of favor here in high political circles. I know nothing yet of society. The season is beginning, which will be a torment to me.

Think of me; write to me. Your letters will reach me through the post, if they are prepaid as far as Calais.

LONDON, April 19.

Many thanks for your note of the 14th. I can only write you a few lines to-day. I have just come from an audience with the king. I was received with extraordinary graciousness. I begin to succeed, politically speaking, in this country. I have done much for our friends; and I think, that, on their side, they ought to be quite satisfied with my correspondence. I shall soon now be launched in society; then I shall feel what I have lost in leaving you. Write to me.

For the future, number your notes.

LONDON, April 23, 1822.

Two little notes from you are worth more than the everlasting letters with which I plague you. I am so overwhelmed with business that I have no time to breathe. I begin to succeed in politics, and I have given to our diplomacy a character consistent with that noble name of Frenchman which I bear. I am only working to raise the nation to a higher position: we have been put very low. I exercise, as far as I can, hospitality. I find out all the French travellers who arrive, no matter what their politics, and invite them to my house. Yesterday, I made my first appearance in society. I was extremely bored at a rout. I have been unwell ever since I have been here. I have frightful nights. The climate is detestable. Should there be no war, there will be a Congress. That is our secret and our hope, you know. I told you that the king received me marvellously well. I expect a line from you on Thursday. Since you cannot tell me all I want to hear, give me at least the news of your world in France. Lord Bristol has not arrived yet. He will at least talk to me about you.

LONDON, April 25.

I am occupied only with affairs. They are vast and grave. A part of my duty consists in going into society; and, when I have worked all day, I am obliged to dress myself, and go out at half-past eleven in the evening. Imagine what a plague this is to me. I am doing my best to get my domestic arrangements completed in order to open my house the 1st of May; but I doubt if I am able to accomplish it, there is so much to be done. I easily guess who planned your Ministry for you. There is no common sense in it; and, when we fall, those men will not replace us. But, trust me, we will beat our enemies, if only my advice is taken. I have written strongly

to Paris. Every day I miss the little cell. If I ever enter it again, I will never leave it.

I have made my peace with Matthieu.

You only write me cold words that distress me. Can you not at least talk to me of what you are doing and saying? As for me, I give you long accounts of what happens every day. The days are long indeed without you. I am busy trying to bring the English over to the side of the Royalists, and I think I shall succeed. MM. de Broglie, de Staël, and d'Argenson are announced. This is quite amusing. I shall overwhelm them with politeness, especially the first two. It is a piece of innocent malice that you will pardon. With all due deference to you, I think that the pleasure of having saved Coudert ought to console you a little for the fate of Sirejean.[1] Try and write to me more at length. Think of Congress, and of all the measures that may recall me. I have a great desire to know what the mysterious lady wanted. She might have been of great use to us.

May 3, 1822.

I am truly distressed at seeing you so afflicted by the fate of that unfortunate young man,[2] that you forget all your friends. Alas! we have plenty of personal sorrows, without adding to them the griefs of strangers. I perceive by what you and all my friends write to me, that, as soon as I settle things for the Royalists abroad, they undo them at home. Meanwhile, I am doing here all I can. I have written to Matthieu, Villèle, and Corbière, warning them of the danger: so my conscience is at rest. If they fall, I shall be very sorry for them; and, as far as I am concerned, I shall joyfully return to private life, and I promise you never to emerge from it again. September is still the month talked of for Congress. Look well to that. I must go to it, in order to return to Paris. All our plans, as you know, turn upon Congress.

I am still in favor here. I could wish that my friends in Paris appreciated my services better; not because these services are worth any thing in themselves, but because my friends would have less desire to keep me away.

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[1] Sirejean and Coudert were both compromised in the conspiracy of the Carbonari, in December, 1821. They were condemned to death, and their friends applied to Mme. Récamier to get their sentence remitted. She worked zealously in their behalf, and succeeded in saving the life of Coudert, but failed in the case of Sirejean. A long account of this affair is given in the original. — Ed.

[2] Sirejean

LONDON, May 7, 1822.

We are expecting to-morrow M. de Broglie and M. de Staël. They will give me tidings of you. Be a little discreet with Adrien, I beg of you. You have no idea of the letters Mme. de D. writes me. I am overwhelmed with work. Our affairs go on marvellously here. If they went on as well in France, your friends, the Liberals, would not be so surly. However that may be, my prophecy will be fulfilled, and they will be beaten by the poor little Royalist Ministry that seems to be good for nothing. This Ministry, nevertheless, has committed many follies since my departure, and the Royalists have reason to complain. I have written to set all to rights. Private letters, published in the English journals, speak constantly of my being recalled to France as Prime Minister. I do not know who it is that circulates these foolish reports. I must leave you, as I am tired out. I have written to-day a long despatch of the greatest importance.

Oh that I were in the little cell!

LONDON, May 10, 1822.

I enclose you a copy of the letter that I send by this courier to Laborie. You will show it to somebody. I can easily guess to whom. That man (Laborie) is very good-natured, but an everlasting intriguer.

I do not know what could have pained you in my note. I do not like deferred explanations. If to be unhappy away from you, and to complain of it, wounds you, then you ought to be very much pained.

I have nothing more to tell you about this country. The first impression is made; and, as that, I think, is favorable, I am now out of danger. I bring happiness to the Royalists. I cannot help noticing, that, wherever I go, their affairs are in good order; and, wherever I am not, in disorder. This is not by any means a merit of mine, but a fatality that seems to attach itself to my person; and, unhappily, I serve them at the expense of the peace of my life. I am living contrary to all my tastes and habits for their benefit.

Your note has made me sad. I leave you, that I may not annoy you with my lamentations.

May 14, 1822.

Do you also want to make me curse the couriers? All my letters from Paris are complaints. While I receive from strangers a kind welcome, which I have only coveted for the

sake of my friends in France, these friends seem to combine together to torment me. The politicians write me wild letters, and want me to abandon every thing to save them; Mme. de D. is half mad; Mme. Chateaubriand grumbles; and you have undertaken to sigh. Well, there is nothing left for me but to drown myself. It is a pity, however. I am on the road to fortune. I gave my first diplomatic dinner yesterday, with great success. On the 26th, the Duke of York is coming to dine with me; and the king is dying with envy. I reckon upon this growing favor with pleasure, because all these honors render me more necessary; and, in becoming necessary, I have a better chance of seeing you again.

You do not deserve all these calculations, since you scold so. In the name of Heaven, do not join the crowd; but write in a way that will console me.

May 17, 1822.

Yesterday's courier brought me no letter from you. I am the only person in the world whose affection is always the same, and whose friendship is always exact. And friends, when they forget me, cause me a pain that I would not wish to inflict upon anybody.

The elections are now almost over. The Liberals are beaten, and yet their chances were very fine! Do they still imagine, that they are popular, that they are the most numerous and the most capable? The "little Ministry" will triumph: I have predicted it.

I am getting along nicely here, and my influence increases every day. Still, no matter what happens, I hope to see you soon, either by leave of absence, or by going to Congress (if there is to be a Congress), or by becoming Minister. Finally, I will see you *when you desire it*. M. de Staël and M. de Broglie have been to see me. I have invited them to dinner for next Wednesday. I hope that I shall have a line from you on Sunday; I need it greatly.

May 31, 1822.

With what joy I recognized that fine hand! Every courier that arrived without one word from you broke my heart. How foolish I am to love you thus, and how you abuse your power! Why have you, for one moment, believed what any one could say to you? I mortally hate whoever it is that has done me so much harm. We will have a full explanation; but, in the mean-

while, let us love one another: only by this means can we defeat our enemies. If you go to Italy, I will follow you.

Apropos of Italy, it seems more probable than ever, that there will be a Congress. I shall want you to attack Matthieu, and will give you the signal. Prince d'Esterhazy, the Austrian Ambassador to London, will go to the Congress. You perceive how much stress we can lay upon this circumstance. This Congress has the immense advantage of bringing me back to Paris. All these political questions signify but one thing, — that I am dying to see you. I did not write you by the last courier; your silence made me too sad and unhappy. My previous letters must have betrayed this to you.

I hold to the opinion, that our friends will triumph, in spite of their innumerable blunders. I like the Abbé Frayssinous extremely, but I do not think that the time has come yet to put a priest at the head of public education. It will breed discontent in Dedalot; and Dedalot is a power in the Chamber. A division on the Right might be enough to ruin our friends.

June 4, 1822.

I no longer ask for an explanation, since you do not wish to give one. I wrote you, by the last courier (31st May), a letter that ought to satisfy you, if you still love me. We shall see each other again, and that shortly, whatever you may say. You say that the miserable troubles of friendship, as you style them, ought to count for nothing in my real life. You are wrong. Troubles are every thing; and there is nothing serious in life but what renders it happy. Can you believe that I am dazzled, absorbed even, in the part that I am forced to play in spite of myself? If you do, you little know me. I should be sorry, for my part, not to succeed here. I like to do, as well as I am able, all that I undertake; but, as to what concerns myself, I attach no value to it whatsoever. To be loved by you, to live in a little retreat with you and a few books, is the desire of my heart and the goal of all my wishes. Write to me, then, less briefly, if you can. Remember the Congress. It is almost time for the question to come up.

Thursday, June 6, 1822.

I leave for Windsor, where I am to dine and sleep at the Castle. I can only write you a line, to tell you that the courier has brought me nothing from you. But I hope that you will write to me very soon. The time for the Congress is approaching. What happiness if I am to see you in a month!

London, June 11, 1822.

The grand affair is begun. I enclose you a copy of the letter I have just written to Matthieu.

I have almost a hope that he will comply. There is no reasonable objection to make, and the letter certainly is friendly. I have been careful not to wound his self-love any more than his heart. You can now say to him frankly, that I appear to have a strong desire to go to the Congress. I have no doubt, that you will manage the affair with your usual prudence and power. Think of our happiness if we succeed, as that would arrange every thing! I have some hope, because I have always succeeded in a regular plan; and you know, that, in order to accomplish our ends, I have always thought it was necessary first to go to England, and then to the Congress. Then I shall have before me either the most honorable retirement, or the Ministry the most useful to France. I have always thought, so long as I did not occupy a high position out of the Ministry, my importance would not be recognized by the ignorant. In mounting step by step, I am much more sure of remaining on the top. My sojourn of three months in England has already been, politically speaking, of immense benefit to me. Apropos of England, do you know that I gave a dinner to Charles and Horace Vernet, and that these two fiery Liberals appeared much pleased with me? M. de Broglie is now in Paris. M. de Staël remains with us. Say something pleasant to me.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO M. DE MONTMORENCY.

June 11, 1822.

I have a request to make to you, noble Viscount, the object of which is the goal of my diplomatic ambition; and I should like to obtain it through you. I want to go to the Congress. I think, for the interest of both of us, it is well that you should put me in direct relation with the sovereigns of Europe: you will thus complete my career; and you will always have me nigh at hand, to make friends for you, and to defeat your enemies. These are my more general reasons.

You must know now, by the examination of the records of your Ministry, that all the diplomacy of your predecessors is hostile. M. de Caraman is one of the least friendly members of the old diplomatic corps; and, to this great objection, he joins another, that of being the tool of M. de Metternich. La Ferronnays, excellent elsewhere, did not succeed at all at the Congress; and, moreover, he was displeasing to his emperor. Of the three French Plenipotentiaries at Laybach, M. de Blacas was the only one that was agreeable to the sovereigns; and, if

the Congress is held in Italy, it is natural that M. de Blacas should be present. If I am with him, I will prevent his falling again into the political obsequiousness into which he was dragged. You perhaps know, that your predecessors would themselves have sent me to Laybach, had not the obstinacy and hesitation of the King of Prussia, as to whether or not he would remain at Berlin, caused such a waste of time, that the Congress was over before they had come to a decision. I ask you to do for me what your predecessors would have done; and my position for obtaining this favor is better to-day than it was then. I am *Ambassador* at the court of the first power of Europe. I have acquired an influence which I did not possess when I was only *Minister* to Berlin. It is very necessary for you to have at the Congress a man who understands English politics, and who may discover what is the secret relation existing between the Courts of Vienna and London. I can be of no use whatever in England during the Congress.

All news will be received in Paris before reaching London; and the Court of London will not send their official despatches to me to read and make extracts from, as the Court of Berlin did. In a month, all public business, you know, ceases in London; even the Ministers go away into the country, and can no longer be brought together. This state of stagnation lasts almost eight months. At this time, also, almost all the Ambassadors are going away on leave of absence to the Continent, or are travelling in England. No objection can be made to my appointment, in regard to the distance or the length of the journey. Vienna, for M. Caraman, is just as far from Florence as London is from that city; and as for M. de Ferronnays, to get from Petersburg to Florence is to go from one end of Europe to the other.

I therefore see, noble Viscount, no reasonable objection. We can, and ought to have, at least three Ambassadors at the Congress of Florence, as we had three at the Congress of Laybach. The most important questions in the world are to be discussed there, and one Ambassador alone would not dare take it upon himself to decide them. Why, then, cannot I be one of the three? Why should you give M. de Caraman the preference over me? Am I not your friend, the foreign representative of your Ministry; the man who understands your policy; who can make friends for you at the Congress, as he has done in London? Perhaps you will think of the Duke de Laval. Well, I ask to accompany him; and by this means you can bring together in friendly relations two men, between whom, unhappily, there have been some political differences. Now, this is my plan: for the king, M. de Blacas; for you, the Duke

de Laval; and for your party and Ministry, myself. If you think that there might be four, I should propose Rayneval, as understanding the whole matter thoroughly, and representing another side of the party. For my nomination, you will have a very notable precedent. Prince Esterhazy is going; and he, like myself, is Ambassador to London.

Noble Viscount, I act always with frankness: and when people have said to you, that I was "*not friendly to you, and wanted your place,*" I have written to say, that it was a base falsehood. I do not abandon my friends in disgrace, nor do I envy them in prosperity. Remain where you are: I am happy and proud to serve under you. With the same honesty, I ask you to send me to the Congress; and I do not conceal from you my reasonable pretensions. You ought to seek to elevate me; I ought to be your right hand. There is no mental reservation in my request. I wish to go to Congress, in order to return more powerful to England, where I am happy, and where I have succeeded far beyond my expectations.

If, in the future, you consider that I can be useful to you at home, you will always find me ready to serve you; but at present I only ask, that I may be allowed to follow out and complete my diplomatic career. At Berlin and London, I have overcome the prejudices entertained against us. You cannot send me to pass three months at all the courts; therefore it is well to take advantage of a Congress, where at one stroke I can do for our cause what I have only hitherto been able to do separately and imperfectly. Finally, it is important that your representatives at the Congress should not be those of the old Ministry.

I have been very lengthy, noble Viscount, and I could still say a great deal more. I have examined the matter thoroughly, because I have it much at heart, and desire it ardently. I have thought of every possible objection; and I will avow to you, that not one seems reasonable to me. If the King of England should go to the Continent, so much the more reason that I should accompany him, as MM. de Caraman and de La Ferronnays followed the Emperors of Austria and Russia.

I await, noble Viscount, your decision. You will not refuse what I request of you in the name of policy and friendship.

CHAPTER X.

1822.

Charlotte Ives. — Letters from Lady Charlotte Sutton to M. de Chateaubriand. — Letters of M. de Chateaubriand to Mme. Récamier.

THE exquisite picture M. de Chateaubriand draws in his memoirs of the household of the Rev. Mr. Ives, of Bungay, and especially that of the young daughter Charlotte, will be familiar to many of my readers. M. de Chateaubriand was introduced to this family, while on an excursion in Suffolk. He was most cordially received by them; and very imprudently, no doubt, allowed himself to become interested in the daughter, whose affections he engaged. The hand of Miss Ives was offered to him; but I must allow him to speak for himself: —

"I saw with dread the moment approaching, when I should be obliged to leave. On the evening of the day announced for my departure, the dinner was sad. To my great astonishment, Mr. Ives withdrew with his daughter, at dessert; and I was left alone with Mrs. Ives. She became very much embarrassed, and I thought she was going to reproach me for an attachment which she had discovered, but of which I had never spoken. She looked at me, cast down her eyes, and blushed. At length, making a great effort to overcome her embarrassment, 'Sir,' she said to me in English, 'you have seen my confusion. I do not know whether Charlotte pleases you; but my daughter has certainly become attached to you. Mr. Ives and I have consulted together, and we think that you would make our daughter happy. You have no longer any country; you have just lost your relations; your property is sold. What, then, can recall you to France? Until you inherit our property, you can live with us.' . . .

"I threw myself at Mrs. Ives's feet, and covered her hands with tears and kisses. She thought that I wept for joy, and began to sob from the same feeling. She put out her hand to

pull the bell: she called for her husband and child. 'Stop,' I cried; 'I am married.' She fainted away."

Twenty-seven years later, the poor proscribed young man, now the first writer of his century, and Ambassador of France to England, saw that Charlotte again, of whom he retained a charming and sacred recollection. She was still beautiful, and, in the poetic language of M. de Chateaubriand, "the years that had passed over her had only left their springs behind." She was married, and the mother of two fine young men, for whom she solicited his patronage.

Lady Charlotte Sutton wrote two letters to M. de Chateaubriand: the first, while he was Ambassador in England; the second, in June, 1825. Before writing to him the second letter, Lady Sutton made a voyage to France; and I fix the time of this trip in 1824, though M. de Chateaubriand places it, in his memoirs, during his Ministry, in 1823. He must have been in a melancholy mood when Charlotte saw him, since his reception of her left so painful an impression; and he himself in his memoirs expresses regret, and almost remorse, for the coldness that had pained her.

In leaving these letters to Mme. Récamier, M. de Chateaubriand certainly desired to testify his respect for the person whom he had seemingly slighted; and I publish them here, in the belief that I am responding to the intention of M. de Chateaubriand: —

DITCHINGHAM LODGE, near BUNGAY, June 17, 1822.

Occupied with the fate of empires, and stationed on so lofty an eminence that the petty concerns of humbler life can scarcely be visible, your Excellency cannot easily imagine how much the mind of a private individual may dwell on a single thought, until it becomes painful from intensity. Unwilling to be guilty of intrusion (especially on you), yet equally reluctant to appear ungrateful, you perhaps would smile, could you fully know the embarrassment even this letter has occasioned me. But your kind words, "*Puis-je être bon à quelque chose pour vous?*" and the kind tone with which they were attended, have echoed in my heart, until perhaps they have disturbed my head. Twelve long months have now elapsed since I heard them, during which time I have often painfully regretted having very in-

adequately expressed my deep-felt sense of your kindness; but, in truth, it was so blended with other feelings, that I could not dwell on the subject. The hope, too, which your Excellency permitted me to entertain of seeing you here (a hope so pleasing that I overlooked the impossibilities of its accomplishment) awakened my maternal vanity to fancy that my sons might win some portion of your approbation for themselves.

When I had last the honor of seeing you, you were proceeding to Gloucester Lodge, with the kind intention of speaking in favor of one of my sons to Mr. Canning, whose accession to the Ministry gives him perhaps as much influence with respect to India now as his own personal destination thither would have done. Assuredly my own feelings would not lead me to desire such a banishment for any of my children; but my eldest son, Samuel Ives Sutton, now in his seventeenth year, has expressed so decided and steady a wish for some civil appointment in India, that it is my duty to do all in my power to promote it.

A writership to Madras, for next year, is the summit of his ambition. It is not in itself a very great thing, yet so numerous are the competitors, that it is absolutely unattainable, excepting by the hand of power. This, then, my lord, is the point; *and how much it has cost me to come to it you can never know.*

With the most earnest wishes for your health and happiness, and with every sentiment of the highest consideration and respect, in which Admiral Sutton begs to be permitted to join, I have the honor to be your Lordship's most obedient, humble servant. CHARLOTTE SUTTON.

JUNE 14, 1825.

MY LORD, — Permit me to assure your Lordship that I am not guilty of the presumption of intending to inflict an annual letter upon you, and sincerely do I regret that my thoughts cannot be open to your view instead of these lines; as, could you know them, I venture to believe you would readily forgive what otherwise may appear intrusive. Once since I left Paris, I have presumed to trouble your Lordship with a few lines, requesting that the manuscript I had so cherished during twenty-seven years might be returned to me. But, as it has not been your pleasure to comply with this request, I suppose I ought to forbear a repetition of it.

My Lord, I may perhaps not again intrude on you; I may never see you more on this side of the grave: forgive me, then, this once, if I avail myself of the opportunity afforded by

Admiral Sutton, who is going to Paris with the intention of leaving my eldest son there, in order that he may attain some facility in speaking the French language; an acquirement which will perhaps be useful to him, whatever may be his future destiny. When I had the honor of seeing you at Paris, I felt the impossibility of trespassing upon your Lordship's occupied time, and therefore could not venture to explain myself on some points, in which I saw by your glance (which language it is impossible to misunderstand) what your politeness would kindly have concealed.

But if, in the endeavor to promote the welfare of her child, a mother should say a few words too much, it is, I trust, an error that in some measure pleads its own excuse, particularly in a time like the present, when interest is *every thing*, and scarcely any situation in which a young man may struggle through life can be obtained, *even by purchase*, unless patronage smooths the way.

But I will not presume further to detain your attention. Let it be permitted me only to say, my Lord, that feelings too keen to be controlled rendered the first few minutes I passed under your roof most acutely painful. The events of seven and twenty previous years all rushed to my recollection, from the early period when you crossed my path like a meteor, to leave me in darkness when you disappeared, to that *inexpressibly* bitter moment when I stood in your house an uninvited stranger, and in a character as new to myself as it was perhaps unwelcome to you.

Farewell, my Lord. May you be happy! is the deeply felt, the earnest wish of your Lordship's devoted and obedient servant,

CHARLOTTE SUTTON.

Having anticipated the order of time, for the purpose of exhausting the subject of the interesting Miss Ives, I return to M. de Chateaubriand's correspondence with Mme. Récamier.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

LONDON, June 21, 1822.

It would be impossible for me, without great impropriety, to apply for a leave of absence now: affairs are too serious to allow of my abandoning them. The long letter that Matthieu wrote to me is not very reasonable, and it is easy to refute many of his arguments. But it showed some temper; and though he did not say Yes, he did not say No. Consequently, with tact and prudence we may yet succeed. In any case, I

shall be in a position to ask a *congé* in six weeks, — after Parliament is prorogued, and the king leaves. I see that Matthieu wants to go himself to the Congress. He would make a great mistake. A Minister in a representative government cannot be present at a Congress where the question at stake will be the leaving Italy in the power of the Austrians. Matthieu will ruin himself, and will become unpopular in the Chambers and in France. I am much displeased with Adrien. His wounded vanity has made him ugly. I am sorry I was so friendly toward him. I know that he has been concerned in a hundred tales and intrigues.

Do not imagine that you can fly from me. I should seek you everywhere. But, if I go to the Congress, I shall have a chance to put you to the test, and shall at last know whether you wish to keep your promises.

June 23, 1822.

I heard of the resignation of M. de Blacas[1] by the quickest road, and before everybody else. It was easy to divine that the Duke de Laval would replace him. So you see I know the destination of the latter. Matthieu himself wrote to me of it. In his letter, which is very friendly, he says graciously in speaking of Blacas, "So now you are rid of a powerful competitor for the Congress." According to this, my nomination will be sure, if Matthieu does not wish to go to the Congress himself. He may desire it, if Lord Londonderry goes. He would make a great mistake, and greatly compromise himself: but I cannot tell him that; and, if he wishes to go, there is only one more resource, and that is, for him to take me with him. But I have a counter idea, which I confide to you as a great secret, for you to make what use of it you choose. If Matthieu goes to Vienna or to Florence, why not confide to me, in his absence, the portfolio of Foreign Affairs? Matthieu must know my honesty, and that nothing in the world would prevent my giving it back to him on his return. Can he say or think as much of any of the Ministers, his colleagues, to whom that portfolio could be confided? Such a proof of friendship and confidence on the part of Matthieu would touch me sensibly; and he must know what a political friend I am.

This is my idea. Think well of it; but I should like the Congress better.

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[1] The Duke de Blacas, Ambassador to Rome. He was replaced by Adrien de Montmorency, Duke de Laval.

July 5, 1822.

Cannot you write less coldly? I should prefer one word from you as of old, to all your politics. In the meanwhile, I cling to the Congress; because, if it takes place, I shall see you again in six weeks. Hence, if you have not changed, it is as much your affair as mine. Attend to it. It will be wise to manage, in regard to it, *Sosthènes and his friends*,[1] and to impress upon them, that, if Matthieu does not go to the Congress (he will make a great political mistake, if he does), there is no one to send but me. But, if Matthieu goes, why cannot I have the portfolio of Foreign Affairs in the interim?

This is an idea to be thrown out in advance to *Sosthènes and his friends*, impressing upon them silence and discretion. But not a word must be said to Matthieu: he would take alarm, and the whole thing only means that I am dying to be in your little cell.

Thank M. Arnault for me. When I have read his tragedy, I will write you about it. I cannot conceive how they have brought you into the affair of M. Laffon-Ladébat. Every one bothers me about that business, in which I can do nothing, though I interest myself in it very willingly. But surely, if what you desire is possible, it shall be done.

July 9, 1822.

No note from you by the last courier. You are accustoming me to this style of doing things. Four lines would cost you so much. I have now arrived at a time when obstacles seem overcome, and I am drawing nearer to you. I gave yesterday my last ball of the season. To-day, my door is closed, and I no longer receive any one. Everybody is going away, and will be away for eight months. Public affairs are also coming to a close. Parliament is about to be prorogued. Of what use, then, shall I be in England? It is you who must recall me. My last note told you all about the *Congress* and the *interim*. It is three months since I left you, — three months that seem to me three centuries. Oh that I were always in the little cell!

Very good. I much prefer to understand your folly than to read mysterious and angry notes. I know now, or I think I do. It is, apparently, that woman whom the friend of the

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[1] This refers to the influence of Mme. du Cayla, with whom Sosthènes de La Rochefoucauld was intimate, and of whom M. de Villèle made much use.

Queen of Sweden has talked to you about. But, tell me, have I any means of preventing Vernet, Mlle. Levert, who writes me declarations, and thirty *artistes*, men and women, from coming to England to try and get money? And, if I had been culpable, do you think that such fancies can do you the slightest injury, or take from you what is yours for ever? You have been told a thousand lies; I recognize my good friends in these. But be at ease: the lady leaves, and will never return to England; but, perhaps, you will want me to stay here on that account. A very useless precaution; because whatever happens, Congress or no Congress, Ministry or no Ministry, I could not survive so long a separation from you, and I am determined to see you at all hazards. I never write to Bertin. Laborie sometimes shows a letter of mine to Villèle, and I never explain myself to him. I am still anxious for the Congress, no matter what is the subject of negotiation, because I am sure of doing myself honor there, and of acting only for the good of France. I am positive, that it is the best step for me, and one from which I shall reach the Ministry. You vainly flatter yourself, if you suppose there is any quicker means by which to gain it; and your friends who try to make you think so are deceiving themselves and you too. Of course, I wish to take the speediest road; but I do not believe there is any other.

I am, however, very tranquil about the whole matter. I have a fixed plan in my head. Now that I have shown that I can succeed in the grand theatre of affairs and politics, my self-love is satisfied, and I aspire only to live in peace near you. At the least trickery, my course is taken. I do not give that out. I use no menaces. I am cordial and friendly in my correspondence, but I am on the watch for an opportunity; if they give it to me, I shall seize it. While you pick a quarrel with me about nothing, and about whom I know not, Mme. de D. torments me about the Abbaye. On this point, I am conscious I am guilty. Make amends, therefore, by sweet words and an avowal of your injustice, for what you have made me suffer. While I live, I live for you.

London, Friday, Aug. 2, 1822.

All my letters of the 23d have been delayed a day; and you did not receive until Saturday, the 27th, what you ought to have got on Friday, the 26th: but this is already old news. Your letter of the 27th did not surprise me, as you will see by my two letters subsequent to the note of the 23d, in which I foresaw all of Matthieu's objections. There is only one chance

left for me: it is, that Villèle and your friends may get the better of him; and they seem very decided. In any case, I shall come to no determination about my future, until I know the last resolution relating to this Congress. I shall not be in the least offended, if Matthieu intends to go. It is his right: I only think that he will make a mistake, and a mistake that may ruin him,—ruin him in the public opinion of France, ruin him by the intrigues that will be set on foot during his absence. But, when Matthieu spoke of M. de Caraman, I was hurt. It seems incredible to me, that they should be more afraid of offending a mediocre enemy than a capable friend. That is veritable infatuation.

Let us wait. But remember, that I hope to see you very soon.

LONDON, Tuesday, Aug. 6, 1822.

On all sides, things are drawing toward a conclusion. Lord Londonderry leaves on the 15th for Vienna, by the way of Paris. It is, therefore, necessary that the Council at Paris should make a nomination; and perhaps, whilst I am writing to you, it is done. The part that Matthieu takes is very noble; but he has still a chance. Lord Londonderry takes with him the Under Secretary of State, Lord Clanwilliam. This will be a precedent for Matthieu, if he should want to take me with him. I have only time to write you these few lines, as I am going to see the king prorogue Parliament, and the courier is starting. We are at last coming out of this uncertainty. Whatever happens, I shall at least know what to do. Your next letter will inform me, perhaps, of my fate.

LONDON, Friday, Aug. 9, 1822.

It gives me a certain pleasure to think, that, when you receive this letter, the affair of the Congress will be decided. One can support any thing but uncertainty. I have always thought, in spite of your hopes, that the decision would be against me, and that Matthieu would go to Vienna. Have they joined me to him, as they have joined here Lord Clanwilliam to Lord Londonderry? I do not think it. So I shall simply find myself Ambassador to London. And now what am I to do? You must tell me.

Would you like to join me here, or do you want me to come to you? Shall I give in my resignation? Shall I ask for a *congé*, or a simple permission? Shall I remain where I am? This would be wearisome and inconvenient. To be with you

is the only good thing. If I retire, I give a shock to the whole Royalist party; if I remain patient under the treatment that I have received, I shall die of spleen and chagrin. Advise me, then; or command me, rather: I am your humble slave.

Tuesday, Aug. 13, 1822.

What astonishing news! and what a great change of fortune![1] Hyacinth is happier than I; he will have seen you. Now, if you take advantage of this moment, all can be arranged. It is probable that the death of Lord Londonderry may change Matthieu's plans with regard to Congress; for the new Minister will not be nominated here immediately, and, when he is, it is not probable that he will go to Vienna. There would no longer be any objection to me, or any rival, if Matthieu in his turn gave up. You will say to me, that I am in a terrible fury to go to this Congress. Not at all. But it is the road that leads me the more naturally into your cell, without a resignation, and without a scene. That is all my secret. I shall wait with agitation for the first news from you. Write! write!

Be on your guard against the objection, that I *am useful in England at this time.* I am absolutely good for nothing. No foreigners have any influence here on the choice of Ministers, and Marcellus[2] and the journals will give them the reports and news as well as I can.

London, Friday, Aug. 16, 1822.

When I think that I am, perhaps, on the eve of seeing you, I am filled with joy; then fears and uncertainties return, and I distress myself. Such is the character of our friends, that the most difficult thing with them is to come to a decision. The very thing that ought to decide them to send me, is perhaps the one which will decide them to do nothing. They will say, we must wait, and see what England will do. It is as plain as though I heard them say it.

But England, what will she do? Whom will she send to the Congress? Assuredly, not the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, who is not appointed, and will not be for a long time. In the meanwhile, the emperor arrives at Vienna; and it is more than time that they should come to some decision at Paris, and

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[1] The death of Lord Castlereagh, Marquis of Londonderry, English Minister of Foreign Affairs, who cut his throat when delirious from fever, Aug. 12, 1822.

[2] First Secretary of the French Embassy at London.

promptly appoint the Ambassador to the Congress. I am expecting to hear from you on Sunday. It is centuries since I have heard from you. Work for me, and bring me back to the little cell.

Tuesday, Aug. 20, 1822.

Hyacinth does not return. They may keep him, in order to send by him a definite answer. Ah! may it be a recall to your side! I have received from the King of Prussia a letter and a snuff-box, with his portrait set in diamonds. M. de Bernstoff writes to me at the same time: —

"If the expectation that your Court will nominate you for the approaching Congress is realized, the king will be truly pleased to meet you there; and I need not say to your Excellency, that my own satisfaction will also be extreme. It will seem to me the most favorable augury for the success of the labors of this Congress."

Make use of this according to your judgment. You know that Pozzo is going to Congress, which is also in my favor. If Russia send to the Congress her Ambassador to France, France may well send to this same Congress her Ambassador to England. The chances are here in favor of the Duke of Wellington; but he seems to make difficulties or impose conditions. You will be told that I am useful here: contradict that as an absurdity. No Foreign Ambassador has ever had any influence on an appointment in England, and the papers will keep you acquainted with what is going on as well as I could do. Truly, as far as Congress is concerned, I do nothing but pester you with repetitions. But this, to me, includes every thing. Villèle is still friendly in regard to it. He says to me, that he *only thinks of me.* Is that true? I cannot see into the heart of man, and can only speak of what I see. Ah! if I could see you in eight days! That may happen; and then what happiness!

What a horrible thing that death was! I was present this morning at the funeral.[1] Your friends the Radicals insulted the corpse. The people were very decent. I saw the Duke of Wellington shed tears.

Wednesday evening, 1822.

I send Marcellus to Paris with two pleasant pieces of news: the appointment of the Duke of Wellington, and the surrender

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[1] Of Lord Castlereagh.

of the vessels, which I have obtained. Hyacinth arrived this very evening. The letter from Matthieu, and the letter[1] . . . say Yes and No. Let them do as they like. If Marcellus does not end this business, it is very probable, that, on his return, I shall send in my resignation. Any thing is better than serving men so little capable of judging of events, and appreciating their friends. Your few lines have consoled me; for they were at least in your handwriting. Write to me.

London, Aug. 27, 1822.

You did not write to me by the last courier, nor I to you. Now that my fate is decided, or about to be decided, all arguments, suppositions, and conjectures are useless. I have no doubt, for my part, about the result. I shall not go to the Congress. It is not a man like me they want, and Matthieu and Villèle have equally deceived me. I pity them; for I predict, that, by conduct like this, they cannot sustain themselves. They will fall, and their overthrow will be rejoiced in by people of all parties and opinions. Either from jealousy, or from confidence in their own strength, they have poorly comprehended what I was to them. They do not know, that I receive letters by every courier, from all quarters, begging me to abandon them. I have loyally resisted all this pressure, and you see what happens to me. I earnestly desired to go to the Congress, and I said so frankly and openly. I had two reasons, — one a party, the other a personal reason.

With regard to the first, I know, by what I saw at Berlin and London, how the Royalists have been treated in Europe; and I felt sure of being able to remove, in the minds of the sovereigns and foreign Ministers, the prejudices existing against us in consequence of calumnious reports. I succeeded at Berlin and London: my task would not have been more difficult at the Congress, and I could reasonably have hoped to obtain some influence with the Emperor Alexander; for he cultivates men who can lessen or heighten his renown. It will always be incomprehensible, that a party should place their interests in the hands of those who, like M. de Caraman, have subverted and calumniated them for six years. It is the height of absurdity.

I desired, on my own account, to go to Congress, because it would complete my diplomatic career. I should return from it exalted in public opinion, and consequently able to be more useful to my friends in France, — or in England, if they judged it proper to send me there.

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[1] Probably from M. de Villèle: words are left out in the original.

These are my public reasons for desiring to go to the Congress. You know my secret reason. The journey would bring me back to you, and this is the thought that constantly occupies me. I am writing you all this stuff, while Marcellus is still in Paris; so little doubt have I of the tidings he will bring me. As to my course, I have not yet decided. It will depend upon what Marcellus tells me. You know that, in such circumstances, one word, one injury the more, decides the greatest questions. I know, that, in giving in my resignation, I inevitably bring on in a few months the fall of the Ministry; and I am too honest a man to want to trifle with the fate of these very men, who care so little about offending me. On the other hand, the thought that they treat me with so little honesty, because they rely upon mine, puts me in a rage in spite of myself, and makes me wish to pay them off in their own coin. But, if I do not tender my resignation, what shall I do? Ah! if you would come to London, my decision would soon be made. Well, there are three days more of torment; but it cannot last longer than this week. It is possible, that in eight or ten days I may be in the little cell.

Saturday, 27th, 3, P.M.

A letter from Paris just received gives me some hopes; but I do not trust in them. I expect a letter from you on Thursday.

London, Tuesday, Sept. 3.

The affair is settled; but with what bad grace on the part of Matthieu![1] Villèle has done well, and consequently all your party. I cannot leave before next Sunday, the 8th of September; and shall not see you, therefore, until the 11th or 12th. But, tell me, cannot you come and meet me at Chantilly? I will take care to let you know precisely the day and hour when I shall arrive there. I should see you before everybody: we would have a talk! How many things I have to say to you! and how many feelings have been shut up in my heart for five months! The thought of seeing you makes my heart throb.

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[1] The Plenipotentiaries sent by France to the Congress were Viscount Matthieu de Montmorency, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Viscount de Chateaubriand, Count de La Ferronnays, the Duke de Caraman, Ambassadors to London, St. Petersburg, and Vienna.

CHAPTER XI.

1822–1823.

M. de Chateaubriand's departure from London. — The Congress of Verona. — Correspondence of MM. de Chateaubriand and de Montmorency from Verona. — Their return to Paris. — Difficulties between MM. de Villèle and de Montmorency. — Resignation of the latter. — M. de Chateaubriand appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs. — Difficulties between MM. de Montmorency and de Chateaubriand. — Letters to Mme. Récamier from the Duke de Laval. — MM. de Montmorency and de Chateaubriand. — Prosecutions against Benjamin Constant. — His letters to Mme. Récamier. — Mme. Récamier and Mme. de Chateaubriand: their friendly relations. — Letter from Mme. de Chateaubriand. — Letters from M. de Chateaubriand.

WHEN M. de Chateaubriand arrived in Paris on his way to the Congress, M. de Montmorency had already started for Vienna, where the allied sovereigns first assembled. They hastened on, however, to Verona, where they were followed by our Minister of Foreign Affairs. M. de Montmorency was the object of peculiar favor from the Emperor Alexander; and he presented, with the utmost good-will and courtesy, the illustrious writer to the allied sovereigns. M. de Chateaubriand, who remained in Verona after M. de Montmorency's return to France, wrote to Mme. Récamier that he had fallen heir to the latter's successes. The letters of the two diplomats will explain their respective situations: —

M. DE MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

VIENNA, Sept. 15, 1822.

I must apologize to you, *aimable amie*, for not having written to you by the first opportunities; but the frightful number of official letters I have been obliged to write has almost deprived me of the power of using my pen. I have just received your kind letter of the 11th, dated from that valley where I should

have been so pleased to pass some time with you, instead of running the gauntlet of politics and travel.

You have probably returned to see the coming friend, from whom I have received a letter dated Paris, in which he announces that he shall start for Verona about the 25th, at the very latest.

It is among the possibilities, that I pass a fortnight with him in that city; but not if I can help it, I assure you. Nor do I know precisely how far this will please him; but there are higher considerations, which must decide me to make this sacrifice of my inclinations, if it be necessary. I shall be able to make up my mind, on the return of a courier sent to Paris at the express desire of the sovereigns. They leave here the 1st and 2d of October, without having seen the Duke of Wellington, who cannot possibly arrive before the 30th; and, before that time, word will reach him to direct his steps to Verona. This makes my course uncertain; for, in the absence of the English Plenipotentiary, the whole matter is reduced to simple conversations, which may be of real use, but are less positive than conferences.

You see, *aimable amie*, that there is a probability of my not seeing you until a fortnight or month later than I expected.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

VERONA, Tuesday, Oct. 8, 1822.

Here I am. They assure me that the Congress will be over the early part of December. I think so too, from what I already know of the work done and to be done. Now, what are you going to do? It is a great torment not to be able to come to an explanation. If you come, I stay; if you do not, I shall be able to leave nearly at the same time as Matthieu, who is only to remain a fortnight at Verona. The truth is, I have nothing to do here, where all goes on very well. Write to me either by the post that leaves daily (but be careful to pay the postage to the Italian frontier), or by the couriers of Foreign Affairs. Matthieu is not here yet: he is coming this morning. I have received several very friendly letters from him. I am expecting a word from you to regulate every thing.

M. DE MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

VICENZA, Oct. 15, 1822.

I wish to write you, *aimable amie*, on this the very day that I left Venice, — that famous, curious, and melancholy Venice, of which I could tell you so much; but it will be better to refer

you to your own impressions, if you have been there, or to "Corinne," which I have read over again, admiring the truth of the picture. But, in the first place, I want to talk to you of the deep feeling of sadness that filled my heart in recalling your accounts of your friendship with that great and interesting Canova, who died in Venice while I was there. He had been visiting his own humble native village, where he endowed a fine church, — the last gift of his genius. Venice laid claim to him as one of her oldest citizens; and he came there to die, after two days' illness. He was ill when he arrived. Sunday morning, the 13th, the news of his death was spread through the city, and reached me in a place filled with copies of his *chefs d'œuvre*. As an illustration of the personal regrets felt for his loss, and also the warm feeling for art diffused throughout all classes of the people, a maid-servant at the French Embassy burst into tears at hearing the news, and said to the others, with a great sigh, "Our Canova is dead!" For my part, while feeling what a great loss his death will be to art (which one learns to appreciate better here than elsewhere), I first thought of you, — the grief you would feel at what I should have to tell you. You do not doubt, *aimable amie*, that my feelings always sympathize with yours.

I have often thought of you in the interesting journey to Venice, through the mountains of the Tyrol. I have conscientiously employed in this journey of curiosity only the time that the sovereigns allotted to theirs from Vienna to Verona, as I am to join them at the latter place.

I will write you on my arrival there.

M. DE MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

VERONA, Oct. 17.

I arrived here yesterday, where M. de Chateaubriand had preceded me by two days. Our first meeting was very friendly. I trust that we shall continue on the same footing. This is what I fully intend; and he also, I imagine. It is not alone our French diplomats of divers classes who think him singularly grim and close in an excess of political reserve. You know that he is often not very agreeable to those whom he does not at once wish to please. In the absence of a certain lady, I imagine that he is reserving all his coquettish arts for the sovereigns, who are already numerous here; especially for an emperor whom he sees constantly. I should like to know what he writes from here to the Abbaye-aux-Bois; but you would not be pleased with me, if I availed myself of my diplomatic privileges to the point of completely satisfying my curi-

osity. I am still in hopes of leaving him for a fortnight to work by himself, or at least with his two colleagues; and carry you news of him myself. Of course, I had to ask him for tidings of you, though neither of us enjoy this subject of conversation. He told me that you were quite well, when he left, on the 5th. I was very glad that you did not forsake your country residence in the beautiful valley, and that you only went to Paris to pay him a few visits.

Adieu, *bien aimable amie.* I imagine that it was at your house that Sosthènes — who speaks to me of him — must have met him. Convey to him the news of our friendly relations.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

VERONA, Oct. 18, 1822.

I wrote you upon my arrival here, and am expecting your answer. It does not seem to me that the Congress can last beyond next month. Consequently, I shall either wait for you here, or join you in Paris. You take but little interest in politics. All that you care to know is, how I get along with our friend. We are very polite. He talks of leaving in eight or ten days, but I doubt it; the Congress being short, he will probably decide to wait until the end. Your first letter will be an era in my life. Except in this respect, Italy is nothing at all to me. I am very much changed. Places, without people, have lost their power over me.

VERONA, Oct. 25, 1822.

I have not received a single line from you. I have written you from all the points on the route, and twice from here. If you did not send your letters through Matthieu, or if you posted them without paying the postage, they would not reach me. You can imagine, in the meanwhile, how impatient I am to learn your decision. It will govern mine.

It is very certain that the Congress will end the last of next month, or the first week in December. If you do not come, I shall be in Paris in a month; for there is no reason why I should be present at the very close. You will see Matthieu before me. He will leave the first part of November. We are on very good terms. There has been a little cloud, which quickly passed away.

I met, as you can readily believe, with a few difficulties at first; but, when they saw that I was a good fellow, they forgave me the rest. I have seen the Emperor Alexander, and am charmed with him. He is a prince full of noble, generous

qualities. But I am sorry to tell you that he detests your friends the Liberals. On the whole, I think that we shall do much good. Prince Metternich is a perfect gentleman, agreeable and capable. In the midst of it all, I am sad, and I know why. I perceive that places are no longer any thing to me. This beautiful Italy has nothing more to say to me. I look at these great mountains that separate me from that which I love, and I think with Caraccioli, that a little chamber on the third floor in Paris is better than a palace in Naples. Whether it be that I am too old or too young, I do not know: but I am certainly not what I was; and to live in a quiet corner near you is now the sole wish of my life.

VERONA, Nov. 7, 1822.

The sudden departure of a courier scarcely leaves me time to tell you, that I have at last received a line from you, dated Oct. 28. It is kind, and consoles me for this long silence. It is for you to decide. The Congress will be short; but I shall remain, if you make the journey. So decide.

M. DE MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

VERONA, Nov. 12, 1822.

I have received your short letter, *aimable amie*, in which you express your natural sorrow for the death of that great genius who was so simple and honest a man. I have thought a great deal about him on your account; and, from various sources, and especially from the Duke de Laval, I get interesting details concerning the deep regrets caused by his death.

I send you an Italian eulogy delivered at Venice, the day of his funeral. I had hoped to bring it myself, or at least to follow it shortly; but nothing is so annoying as these perpetual delays in affairs. I long to talk over with you a number of things which cannot be discussed in a correspondence. My relations with the last arrival continue friendly. As far as regards myself, I have nothing to complain of: I have constantly treated him with confidence. He has responded by being quite unrestrained in manners and conversation; which does not allow me to suspect him of giving you or any one an impression to the contrary. Such conduct would be a deceit of which I do not think him capable. But I do not much like the general attitude he has assumed here, — the coldness and reserve which put others ill at ease with him, and complicate relations, that, on the contrary, should be simplified. I neglect nothing that may make things easier between him and his colleagues, especially after my departure. But I repeat again, that we shall

part as good friends as we were before. I have an idea, that, with the kind of life he has arranged for himself, he must be heartily wearied; and I do not know whether he finds his great desire to come to the Congress perfectly justified by its success. We talk of you but seldom. This is our way as you know. However, I told him this morning, that I had sent you a eulogy upon Canova; and he replied that he had also written to you.

I shall be more fortunate than he in seeing you first. I should like much to be with you. Adieu, *aimable amie.* I am extremely touched by your kind expressions of affection, to which I fervently respond, and for which I am also very grateful.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

VERONA, Nov. 19, 1822.

M. de Montmorency leaves us day after to-morrow; and I hope to follow him in a fortnight, unless you send me word that you are coming to Italy. M. de Bourgoing brought me nothing from you. He told me that you had returned from the country, but that you were going to Angervilliers. How many things I have to say to you, and how I long to see you again! It is a great trial not to be able to explain one's self. This trial fortunately will soon be ended; and in fifteen days you will expect me, or I you. I say nothing to you of Verona. I am doing very well at present; but at first I had difficulties to conquer. You know what I anticipated. Ever yours.

VERONA, Nov. 20, 1822.

Though I wrote to you yesterday by an English courier, I cannot allow one of my attachés to leave without telling you that I am expecting with the greatest impatience a line from you that will regulate my course and my destiny. Matthieu leaves to-morrow. Congress will close the 5th or 10th of next month. Five days afterward, I shall be at your feet in the little cell, or on the road to Milan to meet you. So I again repeat, decide. I am yours for life. I was delighted to see M. de Bourgoing on your account. He pronounced your name, and my heart began to throb.

I shall not give Matthieu any letter for you.

VERONA, Dec. 3, 1822.

The time for leaving Verona approaches, and no letter from you. I must therefore go to you, as you will not come to me. M. de Bourgoing, with whom I am charmed, will bring you this

letter. He will tell you, that I expect to leave either on the 10th or 12th, and be in Paris about the 20th. In the midst of great events in Europe, I have only one thought. We must, however, come to a decision in Paris. It is impossible to live in this way. You will have seen M. de Montmorency.

I have fallen heir to his successes here. It is said that he is preparing himself for a stormy time for the Ministry; but it will be from the Royalists, as the elections have killed your friends the Liberals.

I shall see you very soon: this thought consoles me for all.

VERONA, Thursday evening, Dec. 12, 1822.

At last I am going to see you again. I leave to-morrow at the request of M. de Metternich and the Emperor Alexander. The latter has arranged to correspond with me. You see that I have regained the time that they would have liked to make me lose. I have many things to tell you, and I am not as well satisfied as you are with your friend. What am I going to find at Paris? But, above all, how will you be toward me? This note is called for. Good-bye for the present. I shall be in Paris about the 20th. So soon! My heart beats with joy. I have suffered much here; but I have triumphed. Italy will be free; and I have a plan in regard to Spain, which, if followed, will put all to rights.

M. de Montmorency, upon his return to Paris the 1st of December, received from Louis XVIII. the title of Duke, as an expression of his satisfaction. The king wished to bestow upon him the title of Duke de Verona; but M. de Montmorency would not consent to relinquish his name, even to accept a royal favor, and he was created Duke Matthieu de Montmorency, as the head of his illustrious house already bore the title of Duke de Montmorency.

M. DE MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Monday morning, Dec. 2, 1822.

I wanted to come and see you all day yesterday, and to tell you myself what I did not wish you to learn through the papers. The whole of my day was taken up by one thing and another. To-day will certainly be more happy; as I also shall be in seeing you again! You cannot doubt this; and then how many things we have to say to each other! Shall you be alone,

or nearly so, at half-past seven or eight? I will call upon you after dining at the Hôtel de Luynes. Yours most tenderly.

I speak to you of my new title only because you interest yourself in all that concerns me.

DUKE MATTHIEU DE MONTMORENCY.

The carrying into effect of the principles laid down by the allied sovereigns at Verona caused great dissension in the Council at Paris.

Matthieu de Montmorency, faithful to his life-long convictions, did not hesitate to connect the policy of France in relation to Spain with the interests of the other powers. The ascendency which the Emperor Alexander had obtained over him gave almost a Russian color to his projects, whilst M. de Villèle maintained without scruple a position in favor of England. For several days, the Council continued undecided between these two opinions. Finally, on the 25th of December, after a long sitting, M. de Montmorency, finding himself in the minority, felt obliged to send in his resignation.

Between these two opposite opinions, M. de Chateaubriand, with incontestable superiority of vision, had caught sight of a policy more for the interests of France. He thought it advisable that the Government should interfere in Spain, but for the interests of France, without regard to the menaces of England, and with spirit in respect to the powers who wanted to make our country the instrument to carry out their resolutions.

When M. de Montmorency retired, it is probable that M. de Villèle did not comprehend the true nature of M. de Chateaubriand's plans: it may be that the latter did not consider it necessary to make them known to him entirely. But, after M. de Chateaubriand's entrance into the Cabinet, the reciprocal position of the two Ministers was clearly seen. M. de Villèle, carried away at first by the ascendency of his colleague, could not see without bitterness that his own perspicacity had been at fault; and it was this secret wound, too easily envenomed by the steady dislike of Louis XVIII. for M. de Chateaubriand, that more than any thing else explains the fatal explosion, the consequences of which prepared the way for the fall of the monarchy.

It is easy to see how all these questions, which kept public opinion on the alert, were sources of anxiety and interest to Mme. Récamier. Of the two men, representatives of different sides of the same party, and antagonists of each other, one was the oldest, most devoted, and faithful of her friends; to the other she had given the first place in her affections. Their rivalry placed her in a very difficult and painful position.

M. de Chateaubriand was nominated Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dec. 28, 1822.

M. Ballanche, a sympathizing witness of his friend's perplexities, wrote to her on the 29th of December, the day that M. de Montmorency retired from the ministry: —

"If I were completely selfish, I should like to have some great misfortune happen to me, so that I might be consoled by you. But, sweet as your ministrations are to him who is their object, they are very bitter for yourself. I know also that you would support better this *abdication* in which you have so true, frank, and touching an interest, if there was not also an *elevation* which is disturbing to all your generous sympathies. In the midst of such perplexity and of such warm feelings, do you know what you ought to do? Think of poor France, which also deserves to have a pious altar in your noble heart. Do not forget that great destinies are involved in this question, to which individual destinies, those of kings even, must inevitably succumb. Love me; for I am neither dethroned nor exalted against your will!"

M. de Chateaubriand's letters from London testify to his ardent desire to take part in the Congress of Verona; nor can I pretend to conceal the eagerness with which he accepted the portfolio of Foreign Affairs any more than I wish to deny the reluctance with which M. de Montmorency resigned it. But is it necessary, then, to apologize for the ambition of these two men? Were they not raised by the genius of the one, and the great name and virtue of the other, too high in the esteem and admiration of men for a place in the Ministry to add any thing to their importance? With very dissimilar characters, they had the same disdain for riches, the same indifference for honors: but the question with both of them was the triumph of a conviction,

and the desire to have their names associated with a great public act; and was not this a worthy sentiment?

This rivalry caused a coolness between M. de Montmorency and M. de Chateaubriand, but no bitterness; as the good offices they afterward rendered to each other prove. The scrupulously sincere and conciliatory intervention of Mme. Récamier contributed not a little to bring about this result; as Ballanche wrote to her, it was for herself especially that these disturbances were painful. The Duke de Laval, so closely connected by consanguinity, affection, and interests with his cousin Matthieu, pays, in his correspondence, an affectionate tribute to the very delicate conduct of Mme. Récamier under these trying circumstances: —

Rome, Feb. 12, 1823

Your situation is undoubtedly one of the most complicated, strange, and difficult that I have known; but I am sure that you will extricate yourself with an admirable tact, without wounding any one, and satisfying everybody.

In another letter of the 26th of May, he writes: —

"Though I am not encouraged by a reply, I am still going to write you a few lines. I am told that you have come out of all your difficulties admirably; that you have the confidence of all; that everybody is satisfied, and no one betrayed."

But I must let the persons most interested in these differences speak for themselves, and return to the period when M. de Chateaubriand had not yet arrived from Congress, and the difficulties between MM. de Villèle and de Montmorency were already flagrant.

M. DE MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Paris, Dec. 18, 1822.

As you may suppose, *aimable amie*, I am very anxious to have a private interview with you; and yesterday evening I was very sorry that I could not have that pleasure. I hoped, until eleven o'clock, to be able to come to the dear Abbaye. To-day, between four and five o'clock, I shall indemnify myself for the privation of yesterday. Your second, and decidedly second, friend will be here soon, — to-morrow or the day after, at the latest. I have much to say to you about his designs, which would make me smile, if the thing were not so very grave.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

PARIS, 1822.

I have seen Polignac. I have told him positively that the fall of Villèle was mine, and that I had linked my fate to his; because he alone had been loyal to me and frank. You perceive that there is no reason to be troubled about that. I also assured Polignac at the same time that I was not by any manner of means M. de Montmorency's enemy; and that, far from wanting his place, and remaining here to favor particular ambitions and parties, I am going to return to London. As to you, I love you more than life. What are you pitying yourself for? I suffer horribly; but I am yours in pain and pleasure, joy and grief. I shall see you to-morrow.

Dec. 26.

You will see by the letter to Villèle, of which I send you a copy, that Matthieu gave in his resignation yesterday evening; and that Villèle has offered me the portfolio, by order of the king. I have *refused it*. Matthieu did not deserve this sacrifice, after the way he has treated me; but I owed it to you and to my integrity. Do not mention my letter to Matthieu. It is strange that he did not say any thing to you of what passed yesterday evening. Could he have changed his mind, and taken back his resignation? I have at least proved my sincerity. It can no longer be said that I am ambitious. I should like much to see you a moment, at half-past one.

Saturday morning.

We are still in a state of great excitement. There is such an outside pressure forcing me into the Ministry, that it will be hard for those poor devils of friends not to receive me among them. We will talk this all over at four o'clock. I suffer horribly.

Tuesday morning.

I have not slept: my poor head, without saying any thing of my heart, is very sick. I am out of conceit with the whole thing this morning, and I could wish that it had never been thought of. I still hope that the *master* will refuse his signature. We shall know nothing to-day, and this waiting is very painful. I will see you at our hour. You will give me the strength I need.

Saturday, ten o'clock.

I refused Villèle at noon. The king sent for me at four, and kept me an hour and a half, remonstrating with me, and I resisting. He gave me at last the order of command, and I obeyed. So now I shall remain near you. But the Ministry will kill me. Truly yours.

M. DE MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Val-du-Loup, Dec. 31, 1822.

I was sure I should receive a letter from you, *aimable amie*, though you are not fond of writing. I have nothing to reproach you with, — for it was I who should have told you, — after the very kind and delicate way in which you have treated me on this occasion, and which I shall never forget. I truly pity you, placed thus between a Minister going out of, and a Minister coming into, the same place; not to speak of the perplexity of petitions, of which the address only will have to be changed; of our impaired relations; and our last two letters in particular, which will give you a pain that I should like to soften. You will perhaps reproach me for having been a little dry: it was necessary to be so, or else to take a thing as a matter of course which was a veritable piece of deception.

I will talk this all over with you to-morrow, at eight o'clock. It will be my New-Year's visit, to which I attach much importance. The weather is gloomy, especially since the snow; the solitude is profound: but all this is very endurable. What would be less so, would be the absence of my friends.

Adieu! adieu! You know what place you fill. Yours tenderly.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Jan. 1, 1823.

How many times have I already wished you a happy New-Year, since I have loved you! I tremble to think of it. But my last year will be devoted to you. I shall come this evening to pay you my usual respects.

M. DE MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Paris, Jan. 2, 1823.

I desire, *aimable amie*, to relate immediately to you the conversation[1] about which you were uneasy. I have just come away from it. I had only to ward off his civilities, excuses,

[1] Between himself and M. de Chateaubriand.

and protestations. I imagine I replied to them quite simply, without ill-humor, anger, or weakness; and promptly passed to the business details which I had to give him, and which he received very well. We left each other on that footing upon which we must remain, and in which there is nothing particularly embarrassing for you.

I am sorry I cannot see you in person to assure you anew of my affection. I beg you to send me news of your health; and the "Phèdre," which will nourish me with lofty thoughts in my retirement.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Tuesday morning.

I am going to sleep to-night on that Ministerial bed that is not made for me. There is but little sleep to be obtained on such a bed, nor does any one lie there long. It seems to me, that, in passing the bridges, I am going away from you, and making a long journey. The thought is heart-breaking; but I will prove the presentiment false. I will see you every day, and, at our hour, in your little cell. I will write to you every day. You will write to me, to sustain and console me. I have great need of it, I assure you. Shall I see you to-day? Let me know, through a line, by two o'clock. Yours for life.

During this year (1823), Benjamin Constant was twice prosecuted for his publications, — once on account of a letter to M. Mangin, Procureur-general at the court of Poictiers; and again for another letter, addressed to M. de Carrère, Sub-prefect of Saumur. In the first instance, he was condemned to a month's imprisonment and a fine of five hundred francs; in the second, to six weeks' imprisonment and a fine of a hundred francs.

Though M. Constant now visited Mme. Récamier but seldom, he had recourse to her in this emergency, confident of obtaining from her, if not absolute sympathy, at least cordial assistance. The support of M. de Chateaubriand was very useful to him under this double prosecution.

BENJAMIN CONSTANT TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

You already know, madame, of the result of the meeting. All that was favorable to me in it, I have the happiness of owing to you, to whom it is pleasant to express my gratitude. You have obliged me to rest contented with this feeling; conse-

quently, I put into it all that you would not tolerate in another sentiment. Never was gratitude so ardent; and, if it only dared, it would call itself by another name. However, I still fly with only one wing: there is another affair, a prison and a fine, from which you must extricate me. But I have such confidence in you, I feel no further anxiety. I will come and see you to-morrow, if you will permit me.

Yours faithfully and warmly, B. C.

P. S. — I knew that M. de Chateaubriand was perfect. Talent is always a virtue.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

PARIS, Feb. 5.

I have seen the Keeper of the Seals. He is very well disposed toward M. Constant, and I hope that we shall be able to commute the penalty; that is to say, to the simple fine.

I am going to write in favor of M. Arnault. Talent ought to have privileges. It is the oldest and the surest aristocracy that I know of.

Feb. 8.

I left the sitting at seven o'clock. I have had no occasion to speak. I got up only to reply to General Foy, who appealed to me. My few remarks were good, for I was angry. I received much applause. To-morrow I shall see you. I am dressing for that confounded ball. Do not be discouraged.

Sunday, 23d.

I could not see you yesterday: the Chamber of Peers adjourned too late. I pass to-day at the Council with the king, and in my salon; and I shall work all night to speak, perhaps, to-morrow. My speech[1] is not ready. The "Constitutionnel" repeats this morning, that I read the speech at the Abbaye-aux-Bois. You see how your friends treat you, and how well informed they are. Let it pass. Put up prayers for me, as I do for you. To-morrow or Tuesday will be a decisive day in my political career.

I love you, and that sustains me. After the speech, I shall be more at liberty, and wholly yours.

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[1] M. de Chateaubriand made his first speech in the Chamber of Deputies, Feb. 25. It created a great sensation.

Friday, April 18.

Several Foreign Ambassadors have been to me, to beg me to reply to the speech of Mr. Canning.[1] They found me working at the speech which they asked for. You can understand that this has warmed me up a little, by promising me a European success. I am going to bury myself in my work, and I will show it to you. But I cannot see you to-day, which counterbalances my political joy. Pardon me, and love me a little for my glory. I shall see you to-morrow. Salvandy to-day has vindicated "les Débats."[2]

Sunday morning.

I have written this morning in behalf of your queen.[3] The meeting of the Council, which was to have been on Tuesday, has been changed. It will meet to-morrow (Monday). So this makes two days without seeing you. It is a long time! To-morrow I will write to you, especially as yesterday you were a little disposed to be sad. I desire only your happiness, and wish you every blessing, — those that I have, and those I have not.

June 6.

The Council again! Business will kill me, especially if I am a long time without seeing you; but Monday will be the day of my deliverance. To-morrow, however, though Europe go to the bottom of the sea, I will see you. Yours! yours!

Five o'clock.

I have passed three hours alone in the little cell, expecting you, calling for you; and happy, nevertheless, in finding myself

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[1] The speech made by Mr. Canning, on the evening of the 14th of April, in placing on the desk of the House of Commons the documents relating to the negotiations between the Courts of Spain, France, and England, before, during, and after the Congress of Verona.

[2] In an article containing a noble refutation of Lord Brougham's speech against the intervention of France in Spanish affairs.

[3] Queen of Sweden, who had written to Mme. Récamier to intercede for Mme. Joseph Bonaparte, who wished to come to Paris incognito. By the treaties of 1815, the members of the Bonaparte family could not travel, change their place of residence, or reside in any State in Europe, without the collective authority of the Five Great Powers; and Mme. Joseph Bonaparte, during the Ministry of both Montmorency and Chateaubriand, had recourse to the good offices of Mme. Récamier in order to be allowed to remain in Brussels, without a formal appeal to all the Five Powers. The letters referring to this intercession of Mme. Récamier in behalf of the Bonapartes are published in the original. — Ed.

among your books, flowers, and all that surrounds you. We must, however, arrange our life differently; for I know not what to do without you. If that wretched Ministry had only been left in the Rue du Bac, I would be now at your door. Try and write to me a few words. How could you go out at our hour? Could you not wait for me a little while? It is very easy for you to do without me, whilst I left every thing to come to you.

Sunday, five o'clock.

The great news and the couriers have taken up all my time. The Cortes, at Seville, before carrying off the king, pronounced him crazy, deposed him, and named a revolutionary regency. This is the miserable end of the affair. The Cortes is only a faction without authority, whose term was on the point of expiring.[1]

Chamber of Deputies, Friday evening.

Do not be vexed with me, I beg of you. I am in a deplorable situation, vibrating between the two Chambers (where I am always expecting to speak and never speaking), and persecuted with the couriers, and home and foreign affairs. I hope that all this will end to-morrow. Pardon, a thousand times pardon. Pity me. Do not be angry with me. Preserve your angelic goodness toward me. To-morrow I shall come to be pardoned, or consoled rather, for what I suffer.

When M. de Chateaubriand first became acquainted with Mme. Récamier, he was desirous to introduce to her his wife, whom he brought to the Abbaye-aux-Bois. The relation between these two ladies, without being intimate, was always polite and obliging.

Mme. de Chateaubriand, whose heart was noble and warm, had infinitely more wit and originality than prudence and judgment. She was entirely devoted to her husband, for whom she had a profound admiration; but her tenderness for the object of her worship was so exact-

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[1] On the 11th of June, on the proposition of MM. Galiano and Argüelles, the Cortes, assembled at Seville, decided to send immediately a deputation to the king, for the purpose of representing to him the necessity of quitting Seville, with the Government and the Cortes. The island of Léon was to be the place of refuge; and the departure was to take place the next day at noon, — the 12th.

ing, that it too often resulted in exciting, annoying, or irritating M. de Chateaubriand. She made a pretence of being ignorant of the literary works of the man whose name she was proud to bear; but this was an affectation, as she had been more than once surprised reading her husband's books. Mme. de Chateaubriand was an agreeable talker: her politeness was perfect, and her manners distinguished; but her temper was unequal. In regard to her charities, however, she was never variable. They were wide and active, and carried on with persistency and efficiency. In person, she was of middle height. Her eyes were fine; but her face bore the marks of the small-pox, and feeble health had reduced her almost to a skeleton. In a word, she was a good and generous woman, but uncertain, and not very easy to live with. Her correspondence will show how much she relied upon the healthful influence of Mme. Récamier, and with what confidence she had recourse to it: —

VISCOUNTESS DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

September, 1823.

You, madame, are always our refuge in the storm. I avail myself again, therefore, of your kindness, to find out the secrets of our *capricious immortal*.[1] Our chapel is ready. It is charming, and needs nothing but the picture; but when will that arrive? M. Gérard promised it positively for the 1st of October. I do not dare to remind him of his promise, for fear of still further delay. With your fascinations, madame, you alone will be able to induce him to finish his gift with promptness and good grace. Say to him, if you have a chance, that if the niche destined for the saint can add nothing to a *chef d'œuvre*, at least it cannot injure it. The light is admirable, and the color of the stucco just what a painter would choose. M. Hugot advised me to send him the frame, which is very beautiful; but he may perhaps prefer to bring his picture to the Infirmary before it is finished (which was his first intention), and have it put in its place, in order to see if it may not need some retouches on account of the change in the light. Will you be so kind, madame, as to ask him if this arrangement

[1] Gérard had just finished his picture of St. Theresa, which he gave to the Infirmary of Maria-Theresa.

suits him, and what day he will fix? Every thing shall be arranged, so that he shall not be annoyed. It would be only too friendly in you to come with him on the day appointed, and breakfast at the Infirmary upon the eggs and good milk of Sister Sophia.

I do not know how to apologize enough for all my importunities; but your kindness is inexhaustible when a good work is in question.

Accept, I beg of you, my regrets at not being able to come in person to prefer my request; and be assured, madame, of my warm and unchangeable regard.

M. CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Saturday morning.

I could not write yesterday morning, as I was obliged to go to the king. This is a critical moment. Any telegraphic despatch may bring us the most important news. Nothing has yet arrived, or will arrive perhaps for some days; but we shall be in a state of anxiety. Shall we take, or fail to take, the island of Léon? Every thing turns upon that.

I am overwhelmed by conferences and couriers. To crown my woes, I shall not be able to see you to-day; but there is one good in this misfortune, I shall be able to break the fatality of Sunday. To-morrow, at our hour, I will tell you the whole story. You are, nevertheless, a cruel angel, and you do not deserve to have so submissive a slave.

Ballanche dined with me yesterday. I took care to avoid all politics. It gave me great pleasure to see the old friend at my house.

Thursday morning.

We are very much bothered by a new telegraphic despatch, which announces to us from Bayonne, that the king of Spain has got his freedom. You know there are hopes whose falsity we feel, and yet, through weakness, want to believe. But I, have I not the hope of seeing you Saturday evening, at seven o'clock?

Five o'clock.

A telegraphic despatch announces that the King of Spain is free; and that, on the 29th[1] (the birthday of the Duke de Bor-

[1] It was not until the 1st of October, 1823, that the King and Queen of Spain, restored to liberty, embarked at Cadiz, to join, at Porte-Sainte-Marie, the Duke d'Angoulême and the liberating French army.

deaux), he will be in the midst of our soldiers. I will see you at nine o'clock, for a moment.

Wednesday, two, A.M.

I left the Council too late yesterday to see you to-day. I fear that my Spanish correspondence will detain me beyond our hour. I am distressed at the decrees of the king, and I am trying to prevent the evil. I thought I should be free after the Spanish war; but affairs weigh upon me more heavily than ever. If I am not at the Abbaye at half-past six, it will be because I could not get through. I dine at M. de Cossé's; and, after dinner, I am going with Mme. de Chateaubriand to the Duke d'Orleans'. To-morrow, at eight o'clock in the evening, if you consent, I shall be in the little cell; though you were very unkind to me the last time. To-morrow! I am very tired; and twenty times a day I feel like giving the whole thing up.

Sunday morning.

I could not write to you yesterday. I was almost ill, — that is to say, suffering much; and I am still in the same state. I have fulfilled M. Gérard's commission; and, I assure you, only for his sake, for though I am strongly opposed to arbitrary acts, I dislike to disturb the course of justice. I will insist nevertheless. Genius exercises over me the fascination that this young woman, you say, has exercised over that man who carried her off; and, when you add your power to that of talent, I must obey.

I shall see you this evening.

PARIS, Oct. 7.

If the Council get through in season, I will see you for a moment. I want to tell you about something which disturbed me this morning. M. or Mme. de Broglie has written to Paris, that I had demanded the expulsion of M. Comte from Switzerland, and that it was a piece of revenge of the "Conservateur"[1] toward the "Censeur." They understand me badly. Persecution is not a part of my trade; and I love liberty more than those people who call themselves her exclusive champions. I did not even know that M. Comte was in Switzerland, until a gentleman came to me, and told me that he was going to be sent back to Lausanne, and begged me to interest myself for

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[1] The organ of M. de Chateaubriand. — ED.

him. I replied to him, that M. Comte apparently had been sent there by an act of the police; that I would inquire into it, and see what it was possible for me to do for him. I spoke about it to M. Franchet, who assured me that M. Comte was at the head of all our Revolutionists in Switzerland, and that he preached principles strongly in opposition to the Government of the Bourbons. This is the exact truth, and all I know of M. Comte. I have not written a word about him to the Ambassador. I have neither thought nor written about him. It is true, that the gentleman, his friend, told me that this M. Comte would go to England, and write terrible things against me. This threat tempted me a moment, and the evil thought occurred to me of giving M. Comte liberty to go and write these great things; for I am a decided partisan of liberty of the press: but I repulsed this suggestion of the devil, and forgot M. Comte anew, or rather I thought of him only to do him service. You understand me well enough to know that what I say is the pure truth.

At this moment, my interest is solicited for a worthy regicide, who only asks to breathe innocence and peace in the valleys of Switzerland; and I am going to interest myself in this honest man, and see if I can procure him the rural happiness so in harmony with his simple and *naïve* soul. If I am capable of this, how can any one imagine that I would persecute M. Comte, who has done no other wrong in my eyes than writing, in a dull and tiresome way, an article against the king, which I read, if I remember right, some seven or eight years ago? Vindicate me to your unjust friends.

CHAPTER XII.

1823–1824.

Painful relations of Mme. Récamier with M. de Chateaubriand. — Illness of her niece. — Letters from M. de Chateaubriand. — Her departure for Italy. — Arrival at Rome. — The Duke de Laval. — French artists. — Duchess of Devonshire. — Cardinal Consalvi. — Letter of Mme. Récamier. — Letter from M. de Montmorency. — M. Ballanche. — His letters. — Winter at Rome. — Letter of Mme. Récamier. — Letter from M. de Montmorency. — Queen Hortense. — Narrative of Mme. Récamier. — Letter from M. de Montmorency. — Letters from Queen Hortense. — Letter from M. de Chateaubriand.

THANKS to the firmness and energy with which M. de Chateaubriand had conducted the French intervention in Spanish affairs, Ferdinand was at liberty, the house of Bourbon boasted of a superb army, and the glory of military successes encircled the monarchy. M. de Chateaubriand might well be proud of a result to which he had so powerfully contributed.

But, while Mme. Récamier fully sympathized in the joy and triumph of her illustrious friend, she did not the less feel the thorns that M. de Chateaubriand's accession to power had sown in her path. His daily visits to the Abbaye were very often interrupted, either by meetings of the Council or by sittings of the Chambers; and this disturbance of their habits was not the only trouble. The temper of the eminent writer had not been proof against the intoxication that success, fame, and the adulation of others easily produce upon persons of impressible and ardent temperaments. His devotion was the same, nor had his friendship grown cold; but Mme. Récamier felt that he no longer treated her with that respectful reserve, characteristic of those permanent sentiments which she wished only to inspire. The atmosphere of a frivolous and adulatory society had temporarily injured this pure affection. Another subject of annoyance was the antagonism between M. de Chateaubriand and M. de Montmorency. The self-

love of the latter had received a wound, which, though speedily healed by the strength of his religious feelings, was still at that time sharp and aching. With the kindest and tenderest consideration, he tried to conceal his discontent, and did all he could to make Mme. Récamier's position as little painful as possible; yet it was an uncomfortable, exciting time for all parties.

In the midst of these distresses and perplexities, Mme. Récamier's niece, whom she treated as daughter, fell seriously ill. When she became convalescent, M. de Montmorency insisted that she should have country air; and Mme. Récamier removed to the solitude of the Vallée-aux-Loups. In the autumn, the physicians pronounced the air of Paris injurious to one in such delicate health, and advised a southern climate. Mme. Récamier decided to start for Italy; and left Paris, the 2d of November, 1823.[1]

The faithful Ballanche, with the simplicity of absolute devotion, left at the same time, without even thinking that he could do otherwise. M. Ampère asked permission to join the little party, and Matthieu de Montmorency, in taking leave of his friend, promised himself the pleasure of seeing her at Rome during Lent. This last project was not realized.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Oct. 25, 1823.

No: you have not bade farewell to all earthly joys. If you go, you will soon return, to find me the same I ever have been and always shall be to you. Do not blame me for what you are doing yourself. I will come and see you when I leave the Council. I have given orders to my servants, that Mme. Thebaudeau and M. de Voutier are not to be admitted. I love you with my whole heart; and nothing shall prevent me from loving you, not even your departure or your injustice.

Tuesday morning, Oct. 28.

You see clearly that you have deceived yourself. This journey is very useless. If you go, you will at least return promptly; and you will find me, when you come back, just the

[1] Sainte Beuve partly attributes Mme. Récamier's departure to another motive, — her jealousy of a very pretty and *spirituelle* Mme. de C——, to whom Chateaubriand was at that time quite devoted. — ED.

same as you left me, — that is to say, most tenderly, most sincerely attached to you. I wear well. I never grow tired; and, if I had more years to live, your image should fill and glorify them to the last.

At half-past four, I will be in the little cell; which shall be mine during your absence.

Nov. 2, 1823.

Always fearing to cause you anxiety, whilst you count mine for nothing, I write you this line on the road, for fear of a letter missing you when you pass through Lyons. I shall be in Paris on Tuesday, and you will be no longer there. Well, it was your own doing. Will you find me here on your return? Apparently, this is of little importance to you. When one has courage, like you, to break up every thing, what signifies the future? However, I shall await you. If I am alive, you will find me such as you have left me, — full of you, not having ceased to love you. I will write to Turin, and then to Florence.

Paris, Nov. 7, 1823.

I am writing these few lines to Lyons, on my return to Paris, and at the same time I am writing to Turin. I have already written to Lyons. Give my punctuality the credit of this, instead of affection. It is your way to be unjust. In spite of all this, you will return: you will not even be away long. You will find out that you have been mistaken. From your note, which I found here on my arrival, I see that Amelia's joy makes you feel a kind of pleasure, and that you are becoming a little more just and hopeful. Believe me, nothing is changed; and you will confess it one of these days.

Remember all that I said to you about the manuscript.

Paris, Nov. 7, 1823.

You have traversed the Alps, which I shall pass over no more; you are in the beautiful country where I was last year at this time. You are going far away from your friends. Those friends are no longer young: the time they lose can never be made up to them. You are anticipating that absence which will soon begin, never to end. But it was your doing. You will tell me upon your return, whether you saw Italy with the same eyes as formerly, whether the ruins said the same thing to you, and whether the change which has come over you ex-

tended to surrounding objects. But I do not wish to sadden your journey. Above all, I trust that pain may never come to you through me. I say nothing about politics. You are very happy in hearing nothing of Chambers, Minister, or journals. You will have enough of all that, when you return to your cell. Enjoy fully your liberty. Come back as soon as possible. I shall try to exist until your return: in the meantime, I suffer.

PARIS, Nov. 15, 1823.

I have written to you twice to Lyons, once to Turin; and you have not replied. Through the Duke de Doudeauville, I have been apprised of your arrival at Lyons, and thus I have been reduced to hearing of you through others. I will not repeat to you the commonplace, that they who stay behind are the more to be pitied. You took the step so quickly, that you have no doubt persuaded yourself that you are going to be happy, and the rest signifies little. I hope you will be so from the bottom of my heart; you deserve that blessing, even when you distress your friends. My life now is rushing swiftly along. I no longer descend, I fall; and, as I fall, I can only offer up and leave behind me prayers for you. I reproach myself for saddening you, perhaps, in the midst of the beautiful country through which you are travelling. Salute the mountains for me, and the smiling valleys that I certainly shall never see again. I say nothing to you of politics. Things are going on well; but I am reserving my talks of them for the little cell. Return to it. Horace, whose retreat you will see, says that we have but a short time in which to indulge our long hopes. I hope, however, to have a letter from you very soon. I shall write to you at Rome. If my letters, directed to Turin and Florence, have not reached you, have them forwarded to Rome.

MATTHIEU DE MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

PARIS, Nov. 29, 1822.

I received your short letter of the 18th at Dampierre, where I passed seven or eight days, — my farewell visit for this year. Your letter gave me great pleasure: since having crossed Mont Cenis, you have reached a mild climate, and are under a most beautiful sky, while we have been for a week in the thickest of fogs. That Amelia is already better is truly a consolation, and the only one I can receive for your absence. You know what tender prayers accompany you for yourself and her. I doubt if a letter could now reach you at Florence, as you indicate, and where I did intend writing you a little note,

directing it to M. de Maisonfort's care, so you should not miss it. But I am going to send this through M. Récamier, who has apprised me of a good and rapid opportunity. Here, we are nearly in the same position, disputing over the septenality[1] and the dissolution. One[2] of your friends has taken up the pen a little too often, perhaps. But you are aware that I am not in a position to know much about him. We met lately, and found that the simplest thing for us to do was to talk about you. He told me that he had not heard even once from you. I thought myself that was too little, though I desire that you should not fatigue yourself, especially in writing *certain* letters. I said, however, what I believed to be the fact, that you had written to him once.

I am thinking with envy of the friends who will have the pleasure of seeing and receiving you. I have had a very pleasant letter from the duchess,[3] from Naples, where she went to see the Cliffords and her stepson. Adrien will speak to you perhaps of a little piece of vanity, on which my friendship will not allow me to maintain an affected silence. The journals have told you that I have received the Grand Cross of St. Charles.[4] I was inclined to regard this as a very trifling matter, since the others had not been treated differently. But it is said to-day, that they have succeeded in getting something better accorded them, and then I would be hurt by the comparison. This is miserable enough, and annoys me, without my attaching too much importance to it.

Adieu, *aimable amie*. Remember me to your niece and to the travellers, whom you have surely joined. You know what is wanting to complete each evening in my day.

Adieu, adieu.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

PARIS, Nov. 29, 1823.

I am afraid that my letter directed to Turin will not reach you, because it was not prepaid. I also fear that you passed too quickly through Turin and Florence, to which places I also wrote, to have had the time to see that you were not forgotten. I hope that my first letters will reach you, along with this, at Rome.

Since your departure, my work has increased; and my only and sad resource for your absence has been this tiresome occu-

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1 The law to make the term of the Deputies seven years. — ED.
2 M. de Chateaubriand.
3 Elizabeth Hervey, Duchess of Devonshire.
4 An order of Spain.

pation. I have not been near the Abbaye once: I am waiting for you to return. I have become a coward in regard to pain. I am too old, and have suffered too much. I am wretchedly disputing with grief for the few years that yet remain to me. This old remnant of my life is not worth the care I take of it. You are at Rome,—the Rome that I loved so much, and in which I would have liked to live. Should I take delight in it now? Tell me truly what your emotions are. What you feel I should feel, as with you Rome would have lost or kept for me its interest and charm. It is unfortunate to sympathize so perfectly, and yet be separated by five hundred leagues.

Time goes on, but not fast enough. I count the intervening days as though I were twenty. When I meet the worthy Duke de Doudeauville, I instantly speak to him of you. He is the only person that I see who knows you; for Matthieu I never meet. I have not had a great fancy for the Duke de Doudeauville; but he speaks of you so kindly and affectionately, that through you I have come to like him.

I have received your note from Chambéry. It made me very unhappy. The *Monsieur* chilled me. One of these days you will confess, that I have not deserved this. Ever yours.

I will write regularly; often twice, but always once a week to Rome.

Jan. 4.

I have received, not your letters, but your little notes up to the 24th. I should like to write to you more frequently, punctually, and at greater length: but the last of the year is so occupied with affairs, that I have not a moment to myself; and, as a finishing stroke, Mme. de Chateaubriand has been and is still quite ill. So you perceive both of us have ended the year sadly. Another has now begun. Ah! may it be happier than the last! It will be so, if you come back. Trust me, who am an old traveller, there is nothing comparable to quiet, the corner of the fire, and a few old and tried friends.

I will not talk to you of politics. In three months, the Chamber will re-open. If I have the good fortune to succeed at the Tribune the same as last year, and we obtain (as I am almost sure we shall) the septenality, then my career will have been useful to my country both at home and abroad, and I care not for the rest. But return, and tell me all you have seen in Rome, which I, no doubt, shall never see again.

I see that affairs will not allow of my writing regularly; but I will do so as often as I can. Those days of which I wrote you have not passed away. You have only to return to your cell.

Mme. Récamier arrived in Rome the last of November, where she was welcomed so warmly by her old and faithful friend, the Duke de Laval, that she was deeply touched.

He put his house, servants, and horses at Mme. Récamier's command; and came every evening, either early or late, to see her at her lodgings, engaged for her by the Duchess of Devonshire.

The Duke, who was Ambassador to Rome, represented his country nobly. Benevolent and gracious to everybody, toward his countrymen he exercised a large hospitality. The urbanity of his manners, and his moderation of character, were in perfect harmony with the conciliating spirit of the Government to which he was accredited, and with the mildness of the princes whom he represented. Consequently, the Bonaparte family enjoyed at Rome perfect tranquillity and security. They were very numerous there. Cardinal Fesch; Mme. Letitia, the mother of Napoleon I.; the Princess Borghèse; Lucien Bonaparte — Prince de Canino — and his children; and Jerome, the old King of Westphalia, — were all settled in the Roman States, and resided generally in the capital.

France was also honorably represented at Rome by others besides its Ambassador. The colony of our artists boasted of some illustrious names, and, what was better still, of men of intellect and of noble character,—such as Guérin, Schnetz, and Leopold Robert. Making the round of their studios was a way of spending the morning, in which Mme. Récamier, accompanied frequently by the Ambassador of France, took great delight. Guérin, Schnetz, and Robert, moreover, visited her assiduously.

Mme. Récamier also found in the Duchess of Devonshire an agreeable and sympathetic companion. The latter had been remarkably handsome, and was still a very striking-looking person. She was extremely thin and deadly pale; but her features were fine and regular, her bearing erect and majestic, while her magnificent eyes were full of fire. Her beautiful arms and hands, fearfully emaciated, were as white as ivory; and she covered them with bracelets and rings. The grace and distinction of her manners could not be surpassed: they were caressing, and tinged

with melancholy; for her youth had not been without its trials, and the romantic circumstances of her life had left their impress upon her.

The duchess, who had resided for a long time at Rome, was the intimate and devoted friend of the Cardinal Consalvi, Prime Minister of Pius VII. This intimacy of an English woman of rank, and a Protestant, with a Cardinal, Secretary of State to the Sovereign Pontiff, was not the least singular feature in the life of the duchess. With the Duke de Laval, whom she had known as an exile in England, she was well acquainted. Both Adrien and Matthieu de Montmorency always spoke of her as *la duchesse cousine*, though there was no tie of relationship between them. The Duke de Laval, in speaking of her to Mme. Récamier (May, 1823), thus characterizes her: —

"I sympathize with the duchess in admiring you. She has some of your qualities, to which she owes the success of her whole life. She is the mildest of all the women who rule through sweetness, and she commands invariable obedience. What she did in London in her youth, she is now doing here. All Rome is at her disposal; Ministers, cardinals, painters, sculptors, society, — all are at her feet."

The life of this lovely and generous woman was princely: she, in Rome, received strangers, and particularly the English, with perfect affability. She was interested in letters, and was both a patron of art and an amateur. She published, at her own expense, the fifth Satire of Horace, with a versified Italian translation; and also a translation of the Æneid, by Annibal Caro. These volumes, superb folios, were embellished with fine steel engravings by the most skilful foreign and native artists then residing in Italy. Camuccini, Catel, Chauvin, Boguet, Pomardi, Williams, Eastlake, Gmelin, and Keisermann, — each furnished one or more of the illustrations; and the duchess herself contributed two designs, which compare, not unfavorably, with the rest.

But the death of Pius VII. on the 20th August, 1823, by ruining the political fortunes of Cardinal Consalvi, brought a sad change to this brilliant career. The cardinal — whose health was already impaired, and who had long

been reproached for his liberal tendencies, the favor foreigners enjoyed under his Government, and also for his intimacy with an English woman — did not long survive his master. When Mme. Récamier arrived in Rome, he was seriously ill. She, therefore, had no opportunity of seeing him; but for six weeks she was the sympathizing confidant of the anguish and alternate hopes and fears of the Duchess of Devonshire. The cardinal died the following January, seven months after the death of Pius VII.

Upon her arrival at Rome, Mme. Récamier had another trouble in the serious illness of her maid. She thus wrote in regard to it to M. Paul David: —

ROME, Dec. 10, 1823.

I am very sure, my good Paul, that you have sympathized with all our vexations. It is only a few days since we have begun to breathe again. Amelia has been good and charming, in the midst of all our annoyances: her health is good, and she has no cough; but the bustle, society, and conversation easily fatigue her. We had a few people here yesterday: she was interested, but by the end of the evening very tired. Great care will be necessary before she fully regains her health. Mine is much impaired: I cough continually and sleep badly; but for the last few days I have been calmer, and am beginning to enjoy this country, of whose charm I am very sensible. I trouble myself only about some matters that, in the hurry of my departure, I was forced to neglect. I wish you would do me the favor to go to my lawyer, and talk over with him what I may have forgotten in my perplexity; for you know I like order in business, and I rely too much upon your friendship to be afraid of troubling you with my affairs. We rank your letters among our greatest pleasures. We are expecting "L'École des Vieillards," from which we promise ourselves much gratification. Amelia is writing to her uncle. Please give my kindest love to my father and M. Simonard. Remember me to Mme. Pasquier, who kindly sympathizes, I am sure, with all our vexations. Give our regards also to Mme. de Malartic, whom we like extremely.

Remember us, moreover, to all our friends, and continue to write to us. You can direct your letters to the care of the Duke de Laval. Adieu, adieu.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

PARIS, Jan. 2?, 1824.

You talk about my triumphs and my forgetfulness. Believe in neither one nor the other. If political successes, involving labors that are killing me, are triumphs; if losing the remnant of one's life in distasteful occupations can make one forget the attachments and pleasures of another kind of existence, — then, at least, these successes and occupations have not that effect upon me. I do not write to you as often as I should like: sometimes there are no couriers, and I do not dare to trust my letters to the post; sometimes I am so pressed by business, that I am obliged to work all night. I had hoped to be relieved after the Spanish war; but it has only been the beginning of negotiations and difficulties for me. How fortunate you are in being among the ruins of Rome! How I wish I were there with you! When shall I recover my independence? and when will you return to inhabit the cell? Tell me when; write to me. Do not write such dry and short notes. Believe me, you do me great injustice. The pain is doubled when one suffers unjustly. Yours, yours for life.

Among the French travellers who arrived in Rome, the winter of 1824, was Dugas-Montbel, the translator of Homer, and the intimate friend of MM. Ballanche and Ampère. He made but a short stay, and succeeded, by dint of persuasion, in carrying off M. Ballanche with him. They left on the 22d of January, two days before the death of Cardinal Consalvi.

M. BALLANCHE TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

NAPLES, Jan. 26, 1824.

I had already heard of the death of the Cardinal Consalvi, and understood how sadly it would affect you personally, on account of the deep grief of the Duchess of Devonshire. She has been very fortunate in having you near her; and I have regretted that I was not there to bear part of the burden with you. I might have lightened it, perhaps. In these days, men outlive themselves, events tread upon their heels so fast. Thus posterity begins for them immediately after death. I think that the judgment upon Cardinal Consalvi will be very favorable, which will be at least a consolation to his friends. He knows the truth now; and we shall also, in our turn.

We are told, that it is a little too early for the voyage to Sicily; and, moreover, the general opinion is, that this trip

will require more time than we can devote to it. I confess, that I cannot resign the project without a terrible struggle. Great Greece — and in Great Greece is included Sicily — has more interest for me than any other country. All her philosophic, and at the same time political, memories are entirely within my sphere of thought. I should not go to seek inspirations, but to confirm myself in those already received. I should like to know if I have been right in my conjectures. Great Greece is the birthplace of that poetic philosophy, the sentiment for which I feel myself called upon to revive in the world. It seems to me now, that I have a mission to accomplish. I have had already several intuitions of this mission in France. Since I have been in Italy, it has appeared to me in a more tangible shape. Old Europe needs a few apostles like me. Perhaps I shall be alone, as the Jew of whom Cazotte speaks; but, even if I am alone, I must express the thought that God has given me.

I do not know whether you are expecting an account of our journey. If you are counting upon our *impressions* (to make use of the common term), I am a poor story-teller. I look without sustained attention, without trying to give an account to myself of what I see. The impressions that I receive connect themselves with the feelings I have already, with the thoughts which are in me. These ruins and landscapes, this sea and sky, become philosophy, — a kind of poetry. It is the voice of the past; it is the voice of the future. Venice has suggested Egypt to me; Cuma will suggest the caverns of Samothracia. What I see here and what I have seen elsewhere, what I know and what I divine, is always the harmony and course of human destiny. Herculaneum and Pompeii were destroyed by a volcano, Cuma by an earthquake, Pæstum by the Saracens, and the *aria cattiva*[1] pursues the remnant of these populations, escaped from three such different scourges. Why describe columns and scenery?

Here I am alone, at the corner of my fire, trying to reflect upon ancient Roman history, and only able to think of the Rome of to-day. Here I am, trying to imagine myself a Roman exile, and it is not toward Paris that I incline. Nevertheless, I am looking through some books that I bought here, without being able to get much interested in them. I get glimpses of things that will further extend the field of my researches. I am dumb with astonishment when I think of a history so often examined, so often discussed, and yet still entirely to be written.

[1] Song of captivity.

The true historian is, then, in all the strength of the term, a prophet of the past. The gift of prophecy and of divination is applicable, therefore, to the past as well as the future. If you were a metaphysician, I would say to you, that, in this case, prophecy is a synthesis.

. . . . . .

You well know that you are my star, and that my destiny depends upon yours. When you are laid in your tomb of white marble, it will be necessary to dig quickly a ditch for me, in which I shall hasten to lie down in my turn. What should I do upon earth? But I do not think that you will be the first to pass away; in any case, it seems to me impossible that I could survive you.

M. Ballanche and M. Dugas-Montbel did not visit either Sicily or Greece; and, at the end of three weeks, the former returned to his place by Mme. Récamier's fireside.

The Carnival this year at Rome was very brilliant and gay. The Duke de Laval gave several balls, and some magnificent concerts. Meanwhile, Mme. Récamier made only one exception to the rule that she had imposed upon herself, — not to go to any parties. This was on the occasion of some private theatricals at the Austrian Embassy, given to celebrate the birthday of the Ambassador's wife, Countess Appony. Mme. Récamier appreciated the rare and lovely qualities of this lady, whom she saw frequently; and consented that her niece should take a part in one of the two pieces that were played. The slight success, that the young Amelia may have owed to her French accent, — as all the other actors were Germans, Poles, or Russians, — sweetly flattered the maternal heart of Mme. Récamier; and, the day after the party, she related the circumstances in a letter that I should refrain from inserting, were it not so touching a proof of that perfect goodness and kind indulgence which she manifested in all her relations in life: —

MME. RÉCAMIER TO M. PAUL DAVID.

Feb. 6, 1824.

I am eager, my dear Paul, to give you an account of the theatricals. I am still troubled lest Amelia should suffer from the fatigue of the evening. She played her little part with a perfection, a ravishing grace, and a shade of timidity that did not detract from her acting, but only gave it an added charm.

She was praised in every tongue by the audience, composed of strangers of all nations. But when she joined me after the performance, and I saw how pale she was, all my pleasure at her success vanished. I took her home, and she went quickly to bed. She is better this morning; but she needs great care, and is glad to-day to resume our usual peaceful and retired habits. The Duchess of Devonshire accompanied me last night. It is the first time she has been into society since the death of the cardinal. She was very sad; and, when the hall resounded with peals of laughter, she would look mournfully at me, receiving my sympathy. Adieu, my dear Paul. Continue to write to us, but do not make use of abbreviations: we do not know how to decipher them. Believe in my very tender regard.

MATTHIEU DE MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

PARIS, Feb. 28, 1824.

For several days I have been wishing to reply, *aimable amie*, to your letter of the 6th, which gave me an account of the little party at the Ambassador's, in favor of which you made a rare exception; and of the successes of Amelia, which I enjoyed without being surprised at them: but I am sorry that she was so greatly fatigued. This will bring you back to your quiet habits, in the midst of which I should like to resume my little place of an evening. I often think with regret upon this winter, which I might have passed at Rome, had I not sacrificed my plans to the earnest desire of my mother. In a political point of view, I really do not know whether my stay here has been useful. Of course, I am better acquainted with many things that cannot be written about; but, in a certain respect, which often excites your friendly interest, my position is about the same.

Those favors from a distance,[1] which I know how to appreciate without over-estimating them, and about which they have troubled themselves so much here, would have been just as welcome, if they had reached me in Italy. But these are vain thoughts. The question of your return is of more importance. Have you thought of fixing the time when you will receive at your quiet Abbaye those visits of which you wish us to feel the privation? Do not wait until the summer, when, after the close of the Chamber, I shall necessarily be absent in the country.

I have referred to the Chamber. It opens excellently well. The first district elections exceed what was expected. Among

[1] The Order of St. Andrew, from St. Petersburg

fifty odd, there will only be five Liberals; but they are very strong. You know one of them,[1] whom we could very well have done without. I imagine that this state of affairs will satisfy one of your friends, who has sent me your last letter. He told me he had received one. We are on the same footing, — polite, without being intimate. I went early to his ball, where I stayed a quarter of an hour. It was very beautiful; and it is said that he was delighted with it himself. It is not in such things I envy him.

I leave the day after to-morrow, to pass some days with my brother-in-law, who remains quiet and sad in the country.

I will write to you on my return; and, in the meantime, believe me, Yours tenderly.

Queen Hortense, whom Mme. Récamier had not seen since the Hundred Days, arrived in Rome toward the end of February, 1824. Her two sons accompanied her. But, as I have found Mme. Récamier's own account of her relations with the queen, I shall let her speak for herself: —

THE DUCHESS OF ST. LEU AT ROME.

I went one day to St. Peter's to listen to the music, so beautiful under the vaults of that immense edifice. There, leaning against a pillar, meditating under my veil, I followed with heart and soul the solemn notes that died away in the depths of the dome. An elegant-looking woman, veiled like myself, came and placed herself near the same pillar. Every time that a more lively feeling drew from me an involuntary movement, my eyes met those of the stranger. She seemed to be trying to recognize my features; and I, on my side, through the obstacle of our veils, thought I distinguished blue eyes and light hair that were not unknown to me. "Madame Récamier!" — "Is it you, madame?" we said, almost at the same moment. "How delighted I am to see you!" said Queen Hortense; for she it was. "You know that I would not have waited until now to find you out; but you have always been ceremonious with me," she added, smiling.

"Then, madame," I replied, "my friends were exiled and unfortunate; you were happy and brilliant, and my place was not near you."

"If misfortune has the privilege of attracting you," replied the queen, "you must confess that my time has come, and permit me to advance my claims."

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[1] Benjamin Constant.

I was a little embarrassed for a reply. My connection with the Duke de Laval (our Ambassador at Rome), and with the French Government in general, was a barrier to any visiting between us. She understood my silence.

"I know," she said sadly, "that the inconveniences of greatness follow us still, when even our prerogatives are gone. Thus, with loss of rank, I have not acquired liberty of action. I cannot to-day even taste the pleasures of a woman's friendship, and peaceably enjoy society that is pleasant and dear to me."

I bowed my head with emotion, expressing my sympathy only by my looks.

"But I must talk to you," said the queen, more warmly. "I have so many things to say to you. . . . If we cannot visit each other, nothing prevents us from meeting elsewhere. We will appoint some place to meet: that will be charming!"

"Charming indeed, madame," I replied, smiling; "and especially for me. But how shall we fix the time and place for these interviews?"

"It is you who must arrange that; for, thanks to the solitude forced upon me, my time is entirely at my own disposal. But it may not be the same with you. Sought for as you are, you mix, no doubt, a great deal in society."

"Heaven forbid! On the contrary, I lead a very retired life. It would be absurd to come to Rome to see society and people, everywhere the same. I prefer to visit what is peculiarly her own, — her monuments and ruins."

"Well, then, we can arrange things finely. If it is agreeable to you, I will join you in these excursions. Let me know each day your plans for the next, and we will meet, as if by accident, at the appointed places."

I eagerly accepted this offer, anticipating much pleasure in making the tour of old Rome with so gracious and agreeable a companion, and one who loved and understood art. The queen, on her side, was happy in the thought that I would talk to her of France; whilst, to both of us, the little air of mystery thrown over these interviews gave them another charm.

"Where do you propose to go to-morrow?" asked the queen.

"To the Coliseum."

"You will assuredly find me there. I have much to say to you. I wish to justify myself in your eyes from an imputation that distresses me."

The queen began to enter into explanations; and the interview threatening to be a long one, I frankly reminded her that the French Ambassador, who had brought me to St. Peter's,

was coming back for me. For I feared that a meeting would be embarrassing to both.

"You are right," said the queen; "we must not be surprised together. Adieu, then. To-morrow, at the Coliseum," and we separated.

The next day, at the Ave Maria, I was at the Coliseum, where I saw the queen's carriage, which had arrived a few minutes before me. We entered the amphitheatre together, complimenting each other on our punctuality, and strolled through this immense ruin as the sun was setting, and to the sound of distant bells, —

"Che paja il giorno pianger che si muore."

Finally, we seated ourselves on the steps of the cross in the centre of the amphitheatre, while Charles Napoleon Bonaparte and M. Ampère, who had followed us, walked about at a little distance. The night came on, — an Italian night; the moon rose slowly in the heavens, behind the open arcades of the Coliseum; the breeze of evening sighed through the deserted galleries. Near me sat this woman, — herself the living ruin of so extraordinary a fortune. A confused and undefinable emotion forced me to silence. The queen also seemed absorbed in her reflections. "How many events have contributed to bring us here together!" she said finally, turning toward me, — "events of which I have often been the puppet or the victim, without having foreseen or provoked them."

I could not help thinking to myself, that this pretension to the rôle of a victim was a little hazardous. At that time, I was under the conviction that she had not been a stranger to the return from the Island of Elba. Doubtless, the queen divined my thoughts, since it is scarcely possible for me to hide my sentiments: my bearing and face betray me in spite of myself.

"I see plainly," she said earnestly, "that you share an opinion that has injured me deeply; and it was to controvert it, that I wanted to speak to you freely. Henceforth, you will justify me, I hope; for I can clear myself from the charges of ingratitude and treason, which would abase me in my own eyes, if I had been guilty of them." She was silent a moment, and then resumed: "In 1814, after the abdication at Fontainebleau, I considered that the emperor had renounced all his rights to the throne, and that his family ought to follow his example. It was my wish to remain in France, under a title that would not give umbrage to the new Government. At the request of the Emperor of Russia, Louis XVIII. gave me authority to assume that of Duchess de St. Leu, and con-

firmed me in the possession of my private property. In an audience that I obtained to thank him, he treated me with so much courtesy and kindness that I was sincerely grateful; and, after having freely accepted his favors, I could not think of conspiring against him. I heard of the landing of the emperor only through public channels, and it gave me much more annoyance than pleasure. I knew the emperor too well to imagine that he would have attempted such an enterprise without having certain reasons to hope for success; but the prospect of a civil war afflicted me deeply, and I was convinced that we could not escape it. The speedy arrival of the emperor baffled all previsions. On hearing of the departure of the king, and picturing him to myself, old, infirm, and forced to abandon his country again, I was sensibly touched. The idea that he might be accusing me of ingratitude and treason was insupportable to me; and, notwithstanding all the risk of such a step, I wrote to him to exculpate myself from any participation in the events that had just taken place. On the evening of the 20th of March, — advised of the emperor's approach by his old Ministers, — I presented myself at the Tuileries to await his coming. I saw him arrive, surrounded, pressed, and borne onward by a crowd of officers of all this tumult, I could scarcely accost him. He received me coldly, said a few words to me, and appointed an interview for the next day. The emperor has always inspired me with fear, and his tone on this occasion was not calculated to re-assure me. I presented myself, however, with as calm a bearing as was possible. I was introduced into his private room; and we were scarcely alone when he advanced toward me quickly, and said brusquely, 'Have you, then, so poorly comprehended your situation, that you could renounce your name, and the rank you held from me, to accept a title given by the Bourbons?'

"'My duty, sire,' I replied, summoning up all my courage to answer him, 'was to think of my children's future, since the abdication of your Majesty left me no longer any other to fulfil.'

"'Your children!' cried the emperor, 'your children! Were they not my nephews before they were your sons? Have you forgotten that? Had you the right to strip them of the rank that belonged to them?' and, as I looked at him all in amaze, he added, with increasing rage, 'Have you not read the Code then?'

"I avowed my ignorance; recalling to myself, that he had formerly considered it reprehensible in any woman, and especially in members of his own family, to dare to avow that they knew any thing about legislation.

"Then he explained to me, with volubility, the article in the law prohibiting any change in the state of minors, or the making of any renunciation in their name. As he talked, he strode up and down the room, the windows of which were open to admit the beautiful spring sun. I followed him, trying to make him understand, that, not knowing the laws, I had only thought of the interests of my children, and taken counsel of my heart. The emperor stopped all of a sudden, and, turning roughly toward me, said, 'Then it should have told you, madame, that, when you had shared the prosperity of a family, you ought to know how to submit to its misfortunes.'

"At these last words, I burst into tears; but at this moment our conversation was interrupted by a tremendous uproar that frightened me. The emperor, while talking, had unconsciously approached the window looking upon the terrace of the Tuileries, which was filled with people, who, upon recognizing him, rent the air with frantic acclamations. The emperor, accustomed to control himself, tranquilly saluted the people, electrified by his presence; and I hastened to dry my eyes. But they had seen my tears, without the slightest suspicion of their cause; for the next day the papers vied with each other in repeating, that the emperor had shown himself at the windows of the Tuileries, accompanied by Queen Hortense, whom he had presented to the people; and that the queen was so moved by the enthusiasm manifested at the sight of her, that she could scarcely restrain her tears."

This account had an air of sincerity about it which shook my previous convictions, and the regard I felt for the queen was heightened. From that time we became firm friends. We met each other every day, sometimes at the Temple of Vesta, sometimes at the Baths of Titus, or at the Tomb of Cecilia Metella; at others, in some one of the numerous churches of the Christian City, in the rich galleries of its palaces, or at one of the beautiful villas in its environs; and such was our punctuality, that our two carriages almost always arrived together at the appointed place.

These secret meetings had lasted for some time, when, one day, we chanced to speak of a brilliant ball to be given by Torlonia. It was to be a masquerade, which made the queen take a fancy to go to it, and give me a meeting there. We arranged to wear the same costume, — a white satin domino, trimmed with pearls. In this dress, we could be easily mistaken for each other: only, as a mark of recognition, I wore a wreath of roses, and the queen carried a bouquet of the same flowers.

I arrived at the ball, attended by the Duke de Laval. Through the large and brilliant crowd that filled the rooms, I

looked around for the queen, whom I perceived at last in company with Prince Jerome Bonaparte. In passing and repassing, we found chances to say a few words to each other, and speedily arranged a little plot. At a time when the crowd was very great, I suddenly left the Duke de Laval, and, stepping back, hastily detached my wreath. The queen, who was on the alert, gave me her bouquet in exchange, and took my place on the arm of the Ambassador of Louis XVIII., while I occupied hers, under the escort of the ex-King of Westphalia. She was soon surrounded by all the representatives of the foreign powers, and I by all the Bonapartists in Rome. While she was amused at the salutations which, as the companion of the Ambassador, she received from the diplomats, — many of whom, no doubt, she knew, — I was astonished, in my turn perhaps, at the regrets and hopes poured into my ear, which one expresses generally only to persons of one's own party. Before suspicion could be excited, we resumed our own places, and, the next time we met, changed again; and we repeated this until it ceased to amuse us, which was soon the case, for every thing amusing is from its nature of short duration. In the meantime, the ruse, which was finally suspected, created a disturbance in our respective ranks. It was rumored throughout the ball, that Queen Hortense and Mme. Récamier wore the same disguise; and the perplexity of those who accosted us, while they were not sure of our identity, prolonged for some time our pleasure in the joke. Everybody took it in good part, with the exception of the Princess de Lieven, who never throws off politics, even at a ball; and who thought it a great evil that she should have been compromised by association with a Bonapartist.

After this evening, we resumed our daily excursions, with even greater pleasure. I found the queen a very fascinating companion; and she showed such a delicate tact in respecting the opinions she knew I held, that I could not prevent myself saying, that I could only accuse her of the one fault, — of not being enough of a Bonapartist. This remark of mine was repeated.

Notwithstanding the species of intimacy established between us, I had always abstained from visiting her, when news arrived of the death of Eugène Beauharnais. The queen loved her brother tenderly. I understood the grief she must feel in losing her nearest relative, and the best friend she had in the world; and came quickly to a decision. I immediately went to her, and found her in the deepest affliction. The whole Bonaparte family was there; but that gave me little uneasiness. In such cases it is impossible for me to consider party interests or public opinion. I have been often blamed for this, and prob-

ably shall be again; and I must resign myself to this censure, since I shall never cease to deserve it.

A little while afterward, I left Rome; but, upon my return to France, I still kept up my relations with the queen, then settled in Switzerland. Subsequently, I went to see her at the chateau of Arenenberg, accompanied by M. de Chateaubriand, who has described, with his usual eloquence, this visit in his memoirs. The queen was already ill and enfeebled. After the unfortunate attempt of Prince Louis, grief, anxiety, and perhaps the loss of a last and secret hope, put an end to the turbulent existence of one who was little calculated to lead such a life of turmoil. France, closed to her living, was open to her dead; and she was carried to Rueil, and laid beside her mother. A funeral service was celebrated in her honor at the village church. All the relics of the Empire were there; among them the widow of Murat, who there witnessed the ceremony that shortly afterward was to be performed over herself.

It was winter: a thick snow covered the ground; the landscape was as silent and cold as the dead herself. I gave sincere tears to this woman, so gracious and kind; and I learned shortly afterward, that she had remembered me in her will. It is not without a profound and religious emotion that we receive these remembrances from friends who are no more, — these pledges of affections, which come to you, so to say, from across the tomb, as if to assure you, that thoughts of you had followed them as far as there. Judge, then, how touched I was in receiving the legacy destined for me, — that light, elegant, and mysterious gift, chosen to recall to me unceasingly the tie that had existed between us. It was a lace veil, — the one she wore the day of our meeting in St. Peter's.

To this narrative I add a letter from M. de Montmorency, who mildly scolds his generous friend for her taste for adventures and her fondness for exiles: —

MATTHIEU DE MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

PARIS, Monday evening, March 15.

Your letter of the 1st of March comes very opportunely, *aimable amie;* for M. de Chateaubriand said to me only yesterday, at the Tuileries, that he had heard the evening before from Rome, through the Duke de Laval, that you were very miserable. So you are tired at last, and especially on Amelia's account, of the follies of the Carnival, and are entering readily into the quiet of Lent. I will not blame you for this; but you

make a sort of confession with regard to your new and inconsistent connections, of which it is very difficult for me to approve. I clearly perceive how, in your case, things arrange themselves. A little romance, which pleases, even in friendship; some mystery; a few difficulties, either in the first meeting or in those that follow; then a misfortune to be pitied and soothed, which appeals to your generosity: and there you are pledged. This does not astonish me much, and I do not the less render justice to your motives; but people who do not know you so well as I, will prate and write about it. It is possible, that, upon your return home, you may be annoyed with letters appealing for favors. It is a sort of connection which it is easier not to begin than to break off in time to avoid all troubles.

Now my sermon is ended. You say nothing to me about the one from the Duke de Laval, to whom, you were right in thinking, the affair might be more embarrassing. You do not tell me whether you gave him your entire confidence.

Among Mme. Récamier's papers is the following note, written the very day when the first news of the illness of Prince Eugène, Duke de Leuchtenberg, reached his sister: —

QUEEN HORTENSE TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Friday morning, April, 1824.

My dear Madame, — It seems to be my fate not to be able to enjoy any pleasures, diversion, or interest, without the alloy of pain. I have news of my brother: he has been ill. They kindly assure me, that he was better when the letter was sent; but I cannot help being extremely anxious. I have a presentiment that this is his last illness, and I am far from him! I trust that God will not deprive me of the only friend left me, the best and most honorable man on earth. I am going to St. Peter's to pray: that will comfort me, perhaps; for my very anxiety frightens me. One becomes weak and superstitious in grief. I cannot therefore go with you to-day; but I shall be happy to see you, if you would like to join me at St. Peter's. I know that you are not afraid of the unhappy, and that you bring them happiness. To wish for you now is enough to prove to you my regard for you. Hortense.

Mme. Récamier received the following letter from Queen Hortense, after her return to Arenenberg: —

June 10, 1824.

You were kind enough, madame, to wish to hear from me. I cannot say that I am well, when I have lost every thing on this earth; meanwhile, I am not in ill health. I have just had another heart-break. I have seen all my brother's things. I do not recoil from this pain, and perhaps I may find in it some consolation.

This life, so full of troubles, can disturb no longer the friends for whom we mourn. I weep only for myself. He no doubt is happy. With your sympathies, you can imagine all my feelings.

I am at present in my retreat. The scenery is superb. In spite of the lovely sky of Italy, I still find Arenenberg very beautiful; but I must always be pursued by regrets. It is undoubtedly my fate. Last year I was so contented! I was very proud of not repining, not wishing for any thing in this world; I had a good brother, good children. To-day, how much need I have to repeat to myself that there are still some left to whom I am necessary!

But I am talking a great deal about myself, and I have nothing to tell you, if it be not that you have been a great comfort to me, and that I shall always be pleased to see you again. You are among those persons to whom it is not needful to relate one's life or one's feelings; the heart is the best interpreter, and they who thus read us become necessary to us.

I do not ask you about your plans, and nevertheless I am interested to know them. Do not be like me, who live without a future, and who expect to remain where fate puts me; for I may stay at my country-place all winter, if I can have all the rooms heated. Sometimes the wind seems about to carry the house off; and the snow, I am told, is of frightful depth. But it requires little courage to surmount these obstacles: on the contrary, these great effects of nature are sometimes not without their charm.

Adieu: do not entirely forget me; believe me your friendship has done me good. You know what a comfort a friendly voice from one's native country is, when it comes to us in misfortune and isolation. Be kind enough to tell me that I am unjust, if I complain too much of my destiny; and that I have still some friends left. HORTENSE.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

PARIS, March 16, 1824.

Time is slipping away, and we shall meet again soon, I hope. M. de Montmorency told me yesterday, that you were going

to start for home the end of May. You will find me the same, and you will repent of having left your cell. You say that one can always find a moment to write. That is true: but there is not always a courier ready to start, and I have an invincible repugnance to the post. You well know why. The uncertainty of opportunities, added to my work, will explain to you the irregularity of my correspondence. I do not speak to you of our successes: politics are of little importance to you. The Chambers are about opening; and we shall have, by an immense majority, that *septenality* which you have seen M. de Montmorency so anxious about. The session will last four months, so that I shall be free on your arrival in France. You cannot, without the most cruel injustice, doubt my joy at your return. How is your health, and that of your niece?

MATTHIEU DE MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

PARIS, April 1, 1824.

I feel both regret and remorse for not having written to you by the last courier, *aimable amie*. I am rejoiced to hear that the spring has restored you to health, after a more serious indisposition than I had suspected. Adrien has been very good in constantly giving me tidings of you; and you have been equally so in your kind letter concerning him, after the frightful accident to that charming young Englishwoman.[1] I was much moved by your account, and can understand why Adrien should be so distressed about it, even so far as to reproach himself for having proposed, however innocently, that road. As usual, you have been very kind and charming in your work of consolation, which, he tells me, he has much appreciated.

I related this sad incident to Mme. de Broglie, who asked me a great deal about you, and who was surprised at not having received an answer to her last letter. I had not the courage or the conceit to say to her that you seldom wrote; for you have treated me this time with a kindness for which my heart is deeply grateful.

I dined the other day with my rival,[2] and had the seat of honor. The conversation was unrestrained, even on a delicate subject, — a very hostile pamphlet, written by a man closely connected with me, of whom Adrien perhaps could tell you

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[1] Miss Bathurst, who, riding with a numerous party on the banks of the Tiber, was thrown from her horse into the river, and drowned. She was seventeen, and remarkably pretty.

[2] M. de Chateaubriand.

something, and assure you in all sincerity, that I wished to prevent it. But we are never very unreserved, and the subject on which perhaps we are the least so is yourself. He spoke of your return; and I referred to it also, and said, that, as it was now the first of April, if you did not start the early part of May at the latest, your friends would have the right to complain bitterly. Adieu, adieu.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

PARIS, April 3, 1824.

I have received your two letters of the 13th and 20th of March. I confess my culpability. I promised to write to you, and I have not done it. You must be aware of how much I have to do now at the opening of the Chamber. Forgive me; and, if you suffer, remember that I also suffer a great deal.

It is already quite enough, that I am reproached with my *perfidy* toward Matthieu. You know about that, and what he thinks of it himself. He dined yesterday with me, at my right hand. But a man in my position must be exposed to a great many other calumnies. You have been told that flattery has turned my head: come, and you will see. It would have had upon me an entirely different effect. My great defect is, that nothing intoxicates me. It would be better for me, if I could be enthusiastic about something. I am not insensible to the satisfaction of seeing France so highly considered abroad, so prosperous at home; or to the thought that the glory and happiness of my country dates from my entrance into the Ministry. But, with the exception of this satisfaction of an honest man, I only feel a profound weariness of my place, and disgust at every thing: my contempt for mankind is much increased, and my desire is to go away, and die forgotten and in peace in some obscure corner of the world. This is the effect of incense upon me.

The session will be a quiet one: we shall carry all the laws we desire, by a very great majority. There is a great deal of talent in the opposition: so much the better, it will keep us wide awake. I do not think that Benjamin Constant will be excluded from the Chamber. Should he call me to the Tribune, I should be sorry. Do you remember what I said to you of the future, and the certainty of our triumphing? Have I been mistaken? When you return, you will find the last battle over, — the Chamber of Deputies installed for seven years; and a long rest before us.

Fortunately, I heard of your illness and convalescence at the same time; else I should have been very much worried.

My nephew, Christian, has left for Rome. I did not give him a letter for you, as he will be a long while on the road. You have already met him among the ruins, at a time when you thought very little about me. It gives me pleasure that one of my name and kin should be near you.

Return: this is my refrain.

CHAPTER XIII.

1824.

Death of the Duchess of Devonshire. — Mme. Récamier prolongs her stay in Italy. — Her letter in regard to it. — Mme. Salvage. — Differences between MM. de Chateaubriand and Villèle. — Disgrace of M. de Chateaubriand. — Letter of M. de Montmorency. — Letter from the Duke de Laval. — Letter from the Duke de Doudeauville. — Letters from the Duke de Laval and M. de Montmorency. — Mme. Récamier goes to Naples. — Letter from M. de Montmorency. — Letter from Queen Hortense. — Sojourn at Naples. — Mme. Murat. — Letter from Mme. Murat.

MME. RÉCAMIER'S sojourn at Rome was marked during the winter of 1824 by a very sad bereavement. The Duchess of Devonshire, who had been heart-stricken by the death of Cardinal Consalvi, had forced herself, notwithstanding her grief, to resume the life and habits imposed upon her by her rank. This necessity of resuming almost immediately our ordinary life, is one of the painful circumstances attending the loss of a friend not connected with us by blood. In regard to kindred, no matter how indifferent we may be to their loss, custom imposes upon us a term of retirement and mourning; but we have no such sanction in the case of friends, no matter how near and dear they are to us.

The Duchess of Devonshire, already worn out by the agitations of a brilliant and romantic life, had not strength to resist this last trial. On the 30th of March, after a few days' illness, this woman so celebrated for her charms, so distinguished for her talents, and for her power of pleasing and making herself beloved, passed quietly away in the country of her choice.

Of her relations, the only one in Rome at the time was her stepson, the Duke of Devonshire. It has been often rumored, and even published, that this heir to one of

the largest fortunes and one of the greatest names in England was not the son of the legitimate wife, the first Duchess of Devonshire, but of her friend, the beautiful Lady Elizabeth Hervey, the wife of Mr. Foster; with whom the duke was passionately in love. According to this romantic account, the duchess, who was confined of a daughter at the same time that her friend gave birth to a son, consented to the substitution of children.

The persistency of the young Duke of Devonshire in living all his life a bachelor has been attributed either to an engagement entered into with the rightful heirs, or to a feeling of honor that would not permit him to perpetuate by marriage such an usurpation.

But, whatever truth there may have been in these rumors, the relations of the Lady Elizabeth Foster, who had become Duchess of Devonshire, with him who passed for her stepson, were affectionate and attentive, but reserved, and a little stiff.

During the short illness of the duchess, she was kept from all communication with her friends. In vain did Mme. Récamier, profoundly alive to her critical condition, beg to be admitted: the orders of the duke, that no one should be allowed to see her, were inflexibly obeyed. This exclusion, so painful to her friends, offended the Duke de Laval, as much on Mme. Récamier's account as on his own. The old story or romance of the substitution of the children was revived in Rome, and the Duke of Devonshire was accused of preventing her friends from seeing the dying woman, for fear that she might reveal the secret.

The Duke of Devonshire thought it necessary to excuse himself to the friends of his stepmother, and wrote to Mme. Récamier the following note: —

March 29.

Dearest Mme. Récamier, — Pray do not think me hard, if I beg of you to tranquillize yourself. When the time comes for her friends to see her, you will be the first I shall think of, and I will send for you. To-day, no one, not even myself, is allowed to enter her room. Believe me, I fully appreciate your loving friendship for her.

Your devoted servant, Devonshire.

On the following night, she received suddenly these few lines: —

Come, dear madam, if you have the strength to promise me not to enter her room too abruptly. DEVONSHIRE.

Mme. Récamier hastened to the house of her poor friend, where she met the Duke de Laval, who had been also sent for. They were shown into a parlor adjoining the bedchamber of the duchess. This magnificent apartment, dimly lighted by a few candles, had a lugubrious aspect. Servants came and went in tears. The duke and the English physician, apprised of their arrival, came to receive them. Some sad and cold words were exchanged. The physician announced that the last moment was drawing near: then he returned to the sick-room, and the duke followed him.

After quite a long interval, the duke came back, and invited the two friends to enter. The duchess was partially raised in bed, supported by a pile of pillows. Her face was a little flushed; her eyes were bright with fever; her breathing was hard and short; one of her hands lay outside of the bed, and her women, all in tears, surrounded and supported her.

Mme. Récamier threw herself on her knees, took her friend's hand, kissed it, and remained there sobbing, with her head leaning against the side of the couch. The Duke de Laval knelt down on the other side. The sick woman could not speak: she appeared to recognize her friends, and the trouble depicted on her face gave way for a moment to a flash of joy, and she feebly pressed Mme. Récamier's hand. This agonized silence, only broken by the breathing — growing harder and harder — of the dying woman, became absolute quiet at the end of a moment. The duchess was dead.[1]

The impression left upon Mme. Récamier by this pompous, cold death-bed, without any religious consolations, was extremely painful. She thought, and the Duke de Laval shared her conviction, that the Duke of Devonshire, who

[1] Elizabeth Hervey was the daughter of Lord Hervey, Bishop of Derry. She was born in 1759.

knew the Catholic predilections of his stepmother, was afraid that she would, when dying, abjure the Protestant faith; and that to avoid the publicity, and, in his eyes, the scandal of such a step, he would not consent to allow them to see her, until she had lost the power of speech. The next day, the duke sent to Mme. Récamier one of his stepmother's rings, which she had worn until the last moment, and had bequeathed to her.

On hearing of her death, Matthieu de Montmorency wrote to Mme. Récamier: —

April 8, 1824.

I received yesterday, *aimable amie*, a few lines only, as though you were here at the Abbaye-aux-Bois; but I pardon your brevity, on account of your grief, which I so profoundly share. The poor duchess! How suddenly she must have been taken away! Letters received on the 12th made no mention of her illness, and those of the 24th speak of her as dangerously ill. What a trial, this distance of three or four days' journey! One trembles at thinking of the possibility of greater griefs. I am distressed that they should have kept her friends, whose attentions would have been so precious in more than one respect, away from her. What a comfort your attentions would have been to her! one of the sweetest consolations, in fact, that a kind Providence could grant in such an hour. You surmise truly, in thinking that my thoughts go beyond this transitory world. I would fain indulge in some hopes as regards the future of our poor friend. I can understand all your regrets: they show the goodness of your heart. When you are home again, we will frequently talk over your impressions, — all the more profound, from the painful sight you witnessed. When will that be? I am always asking. I count the moments and the hours.

Adieu, adieu. I will not talk to you of politics to-day. The sole question at present is the revenue. Will its reduction affect you? I am curious to know what M. Récamier, and others nearly connected with you, think of this hazardous project. I am still on the same footing with a man of your acquaintance, — polite, without intimacy or mutual confidence.

We see from M. de Montmorency's letters, that he, as well as Mme. Récamier's other friends, insisted that she should fix the time of her return to France. Strangers were leaving Rome. It was necessary to come to some decision, — either to start promptly, so as not to travel dur-

ing the warm weather; or to remain in Italy. Two reasons decided Mme. Récamier to remain: the perfect re-establishment of her niece's health, and the fear of falling again into the old stormy relationship with M. de Chateaubriand. Such are the sentiments she expresses in a letter dated the 1st of May:—

"... I will only add one word to what I have said about Amelia. If I return now to Paris, I shall meet again with the disturbing influences that were the cause of my leaving it. If M. de Chateaubriand was on bad terms with me, I should be deeply grieved: if, on the contrary, he was friendly, the result would be a trouble I am determined to avoid for the future. Here I shall be safe from all these agitations, finding a pleasure in art and a consolation in religion. It is sad for me to remain six months longer separated from my friends; but it is better to make this sacrifice, and I confess that I feel it to be necessary. Amelia, who has got through the winter very well and enjoyed it keenly, does not the less look forward with pleasure to a return to the Abbaye-aux-Bois. You know that the poor Duchess of Devonshire left me a ring which she wore until the last. Her death has made me very sad."[20]

No urgent duty claimed Mme. Récamier's presence at home. Her father and husband enjoyed, at an advanced age, excellent health; and her absence did not derange any of their habits. She decided, therefore, not to return until after the beginning of the Year of Jubilee. M. de Montmorency would, no doubt, regret this prolongation of her absence; but her motives were too pure for her not to be certain, that they would meet with his approval. As to M. Ballanche, he had said to Mme. Récamier, as Ruth to Naomi, "Your country shall be my country;" and he never entertained the idea for a moment, that he could separate himself from her. His sacrifice, moreover, would this year have rather been in leaving than in staying in Rome, as he was entirely absorbed in the study of the original sources of Roman history.

In speaking of Mme. Récamier's more intimate acquaintances in Rome, I have not mentioned Mme. Salvage de Faverolles, who, separated from her husband and with no children, was living there with her father, M. Dumorey. M. Dumorey passed for a strong Royalist, and his daughter

seemed to share his opinions. She was a tall woman, with a fine figure. Her manners were ungraceful, and her features harsh and badly-proportioned. The Duke de Laval, who was afraid of her temper, used to say, "You must be careful not to offend her; for, if she is angry, she will run her nose through your body."

Mme. Salvage was clever and well informed; but her mind, like her person, had no winning attractiveness. She was generous, with a passion for celebrities, and a great faculty for devoting herself to others. She took to Mme. Récamier an immense fancy, which deepened into friendship. Had the former chosen to do so, she could have made a slave of her; for Mme. Salvage, having no tie but that of filial love, was anxious to devote herself to somebody. But among Mme. Récamier's intimate friends she met with little sympathy; and Mme. Récamier herself, while she did justice to her qualities, was not attracted toward her.

Subsequently, Mme. Salvage attached herself, with the same enthusiasm, to the Duchess de St. Leu (Queen Hortense), with whom she became acquainted through Mme. Récamier. The queen accepted her devotion, which was life-long. Mme. Salvage accompanied her in her journeys to Paris, after the Strasbourg and Boulogne affairs; took admirable care of her during her last illness; and was her executrix. At the time of which I write, under the Restoration, one would never have supposed that this woman, whose Royalistic opinions seemed so decided, would have become the most ardent partisan of Louis Napoleon.

In the meantime, while Mme. Récamier was living thus peaceably at Rome, the situation of parties in France, in the Chambers, and even in the Cabinet, were any thing but pacific. The secret disagreement that had for a long time existed between M. de Villèle and the Minister of Foreign Affairs was now more openly manifested. The law for the reduction of the revenue — a favorite plan of M. de Villèle, and to which M. de Chateaubriand and his friends were thought to be opposed — was the occasion of a definite and public rupture. This law was rejected, without M. de Chateaubriand's rising to support it; and from that time

the Council resolved to get rid of so unaccommodating a colleague. The brutality of this dismissal is well known. M. de Chateaubriand arrived at the Tuileries on the day of Pentecost, 6th of June, 1824, when a note was handed to him from M. de Villèle, couched in these terms: —

Monsieur le Vicomte, — I am obeying the command of the king, in transmitting at once to your Excellency an order that His Majesty has just issued: —

"To M. Count de Villèle, President of our Council, is committed, in the interim, the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, in the place of M. Vicomte de Chateaubriand."

The resentment of the man thus insulted was implacable. All his eloquence, all his incomparable polemic energy, were devoted, for four years, to the service of his vengeance. He succeeded finally in overthrowing M. de Villèle; but the effect of his opposition did not stop there. It may be said, that this rupture with M. de Chateaubriand was one of the greatest blunders, and the ruin of the Government.

The news of this reverse in the political fortunes of her illustrious friend first reached Mme. Récamier through a letter from M. de Montmorency: —

M. DE MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Paris, June 8, 1824.

I have been wanting to write to you for several days, *aimable amie*, in reply to that letter; which I have received at last, and which reveals to me those projects of travel which I have protested against in advance, and which appear already to be subjected to some uncertainties and modifications, without any profit to your friends. Whether you go to Lucca or to Naples, we shall still be deprived of the pleasure of seeing you; and we shall pass by that poor Abbaye, to heave a deep sigh at seeing certain closed windows.

But in the meanwhile we are having a most exciting time here; in the salons, among the people generally, and even in the Chambers. The revenue law has been rejected by the Peers. I do not know what the financial people among your acquaintances think of it. Furthermore, it has been followed by the political disgrace of one of your friends, who has been for some time, it is said, in a false and truly intolerable position. I refer you for the particulars to the "Quotidienne" of to-day, June 8, which you must get; and also to the "Journal des Débats,"

which seems, between the conqueror and the conquered, to take the generous side. I imagine that he will write to you himself. His bearing is simple, noble, and courageous. He has just come into the very chamber where I am writing, to resume his place and old dress.

What you will think of it, I cannot perfectly divine, and yet am most anxious to know. Will you be concerned for his happiness, and will your own peace of mind be the least affected by it? Will it have any influence upon your return? I am interested in all that relates to your heart and feelings, and it is on this account I am so concerned at the postponement of your return. I expect, that, when October arrives, you will have new reasons, based upon Amelia's health, for further delay; and this prolonged absence is one of the most painful sacrifices that can be imposed upon me.

Adieu, *aimable amie*. I should have been so pleased to have had you here this summer, with kind Adrien, who tells me admirable things about your real feelings in regard to the most important of all matters. Why are you not willing that I should profit by the knowledge of them for my own edification and happiness?

It is easy to imagine what were Mme. Récamier's sentiments, when she heard of the insulting character of M. de Chateaubriand's dismissal; but, whilst she shared his lively resentment, she wished that her noble friend had shown more moderation in his retirement. It is certain, and the friends of M. de Villèle were conscious of it, that, had she been near him at this critical moment, she would have succeeded in softening the asperity with which he pursued his revenge. Unhappily, he was then among people who, incapable themselves of prudence and moderation, could only excite him to be more vindictive.

M. de Chateaubriand was conscious, that he did not have the entire approbation of the woman for whose judgment he had so much respect; but he did not wish to be appeased, and his correspondence with Mme. Récamier became much less frequent at this period. Besides, by an accident that I deplore, and can only explain by the blindness of Mme. Récamier during the last years of her life, the small number of letters that M. de Chateaubriand wrote to her at this important period of his public life cannot be found. On account of this unfortunate break in

the correspondence, we are forced, in regard to the most important event of the year, to be content with the information transmitted to Mme. Récamier by the Montmorencies and the Duke de Doudeauville.

THE DUKE DE DOUDEAUVILLE TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

PARIS, June 9, 1824.

You will have heard with sorrow, madame, of the rupture that has just taken place. I had been fearing it for some time; for it was asserted, that M. de Chateaubriand and his friends were working against M. de Villèle. I have more than ever regretted your absence at this time. A friend like you is not only agreeable, but very useful. I am convinced that you would have been of great service to him who has been accused of aspiring to the place of President of the Council; and, by your gentle wisdom, many intrigues would have been baffled.

It seems that your friendship leads naturally to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. M. de Montmorency has filled that post; M. de Chateaubriand succeeded him; and I am talked of to replace the latter. But, since there has been a question of it, I have intrigued in my way, — that is to say, against myself. I have no other ambition than that of doing some good. I accomplish a little where I am.[1] I might not elsewhere be able to do any. I wish no change therefore. Many shine in the second rank that are eclipsed in the first.

I bear very little resemblance to Cæsar, as you perceive; but I am more of an honest man than he was, which is better. You can imagine that we are having some excitement, at least in the salons; but M. de Villèle is stronger than ever. The manner the septenality passed the Chamber of Deputies yesterday is great proof of this. The desire to recompense him for the rejection of the revenue law by the Chamber of Peers decided many of the Deputies to vote for it, and to withdraw all their amendments. The king and the dauphin are more pleased with him than ever.

It is not known yet who will have the portfolio of Foreign Affairs. Some people think that M. de Villèle will keep it, and assign a great part of the work of the Treasury Department to M. de Chabrol, who is a very capable and estimable man.

I hear that you propose going to the Baths of Lucca. I am rejoiced at this, because it will be a preliminary step to your return to France. I shall not be one of those who will rejoice

[1] Director-General of the Postal Department.

the least over that, as you may be sure, madame, if you do justice to my warm interest, sincere devotion, and to my desire to assure you personally of them.

PARIS, July 4, 1824.

I have just received, madame, your very kind and pleasant letter of the 12th of June, and hasten to reply to it. I see that mine has not yet reached you. I wrote to you immediately after the fall of M. de Chateaubriand. I foresaw all your regrets on this subject, and wished to be the first to testify my interest. You ask me for some particulars. I am going to give them to you, thinking, however, that you already know them.

A lot of people have been doing their best to estrange MM. Villèle and de Chateaubriand, while we were trying to bring them together; for we had in view only the general good, and they thought only of their individual interests. The result has been very little confidence and amity between the two Ministers. The affair of the revenue came up. M. de Chateaubriand was silent in the Chambers during the discussion of the law; but it is said, either truly or falsely, that he was not equally silent in the salons, and that he allowed his opposition to be seen. It is added, that he, like many of his ambitious friends, hoped to overturn M. de Villèle by the rejection of his favorite law. It was very foolishly rejected by us: the President of the Council felt that his influence was shaken, and it was judged proper that the king should give him a new proof of confidence and good-will by dismissing his antagonist. I do not know if these charges were well founded, and if the sacrifice were necessary; but I do know that I am a great enemy to changes, and that I consider them as a general thing very hurtful: unhappily, I know, furthermore, that the articles in the "Journal des Débats," to which M. de Chateaubriand is thought to be no stranger, do him injury; and it is remarked, that in ten years he is the only Minister who has behaved in this manner on going out of office. It is said that M. de Montmorency, who was against the law, would not have been sorry, if it had ruined the author of it; but in his opposition he acts with more nobility and moderation.

There is a talk of changes, to take place at the end of the session, — on what grounds I know not: but, at all risks, I speak against it as much as I can, and especially against the elevation of one, who, as you know, has but little ambition; and who, having only a true desire to do some good, prefers to remain in the place where he is thought to be useful. I am delighted

to hear of the improvement in the health of your interesting companion. Be so kind as to assure her of this, thanking her for her remembrance. I have had pleasant talks with the Duke de Laval about one whom I always delight to assure of my sincere attachment and devotion.

THE DUKE DE LAVAL TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

PARIS, July 5, 1824.

I have been so confused and occupied by a variety of things, upon my first arrival at Paris, that it has been impossible for me to write a line.

By this time, you, like all Europe, know all about the nature, cause, and form of the last dismissal. With your excellent judgment, you must regret the violent and intemperate tone of the journal that upholds the disgraced man. I think that it would have been more noble, more dignified, and more in keeping with his reputation as well as his interests, to have maintained silence; and in this respect my cousin's retirement has the advantage over his. M. de Chateaubriand, on the contrary, continues to publish denunciatory articles; and, as there is a great deal of talent in these attacks, made doubly strong through desperation, it looks like war to the knife, without any prospect of a treaty of peace. I do not see any chance of adjusting matters through an embassy.

I have seen the unhappy man: it was a duty that I owed to him. He was pleased with my visit, and made much of it to his friend in the Rue de Varennes.[1] But what can he do, ruined, loaded down with debt, as he is? I still think that the part of moderation and silence would have been preferable.

Matthieu is in the same situation, with no chance of returning to active life. Without making himself conspicuous, or, still less, by setting on foot any intrigues, of which he is incapable, he has declared himself opposed to the grand affair of the revenue, and that is sufficient to keep him out of the Government. The most august persons are cool toward him.

Yesterday we passed the day together at the little villa[2] so associated with you. We talked a great deal about your plans I read to him that paragraph of your letter in which you appeal to his judgment. He is very reasonable. He appreciates your motives in regard to the health of Amelia, and more especially your serious reasons, — those religious considerations which incline you to begin the Holy Year in Rome. In fact, I can assure you that he acquiesces in your decision without temper or cold-

[1] Duchess de Duras. [2] Vallée-aux-Loups.

ness. I forgot to tell you also, that the Duke de Doudeauville approves of your reasons, both as regard yourself and your niece.

I do not deserve your praise of my correspondence: it is dry and reserved, and cannot give you much information.

René[1] is injuring himself frightfully, perhaps irreparably, by the unheard-of eclat which he gives to his vengeance. Undoubtedly, he has not done harm to himself alone. More than one person is injured. I am not, however, one of those who look upon these injuries as mortal wounds. We are looking forward to new measures immediately after the close of the Chambers, which will be the first part of August. The Deputies finish this week.

There is much talk outside of the return of him[2] who was so hasty in retiring eighteen months ago. His position is fine; his importance immense, and superior to all others. In this respect, he has made much progress. His conduct is compared with the violent proceedings of the other. He is calm and deliberate, and will not be pressed: he has no enemies, and many admirers. There is no one in the world more upright in his conduct, and more devoted to the public good, without any personal selfishness. I am merely repeating what is heard on all sides.

As M. de Talaru returns from Madrid on leave of absence, he is spoken of for the vacant place; but I do not think he will be the man. It is more likely, that, in a month from now, — before the festival of St. Louis, — the President will make some quite important changes in the principal administration, in order to gain what he has lost in public opinion. The majority of the Deputies in the Chamber are devoted to him. He has the heart of the king and the dauphin; and, with such great advantages, one is not badly off. . . .

M. DE MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

VALLÉE-AUX-LOUPS, July 21, 1824.

. . . The excitement in political and social circles has never been greater than it is now. It is said, that the Minister has lost ground, and is trying to recover it; which is indisputable. It is added, that there is a proposition on foot to conciliate and bring together the ex-Ministers of different dates.

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[1] M. de Chateaubriand. [2] Matthieu de Montmorency.

There is one of them who can say to you, that no overtures have been made to him; that he doubts it; and that he does not desire, but would fear it even, if the thing was to be only personal, and not accompanied by arrangements calculated to be popular.

There is another of them, whose name I will not presume to mention to you. You quite embarrassed me, in charging me with the first compliments to him. It was certainly not the thing; and I did not know what tone to take, when fortunately you informed me that you had written to him. We are on the same polite footing toward each other, with a shade more of attention and interest on my part, on account of his present position; but without any alliance or intimacy. I have disapproved, in particular on his own account, and as a precedent, the very violent course he has pursued. With your good judgment, it will be impossible for you not to agree with us on this point.

It is pretended now, that he is amenable to conciliation; and an embassy is talked of. Perhaps we shall know more after the speech he is to make to-morrow, on a delicate subject, and about which curiosity is much excited.

But, dear me! how much pleasanter it would be to talk this all over with an intelligent friend, who understands with half a word, and who formerly occupied two charming apartments, embellished by herself, on the third floor of the Abbaye-aux-Bois! When shall we meet again? I know that there is a Holy Year to wait for, a suffering niece to take care of; and I finish as I begin, by saying that I must be resigned, that I still love you; and repeat, that all this is very sad.

I have not spoken of certain matters in the journals, which have much annoyed me, especially on account of a man, a near connection of mine, and who might perhaps have listened to reason, if you had been here to talk to him.

PARIS, July 22, 1824.

It is the place of M. de Chateaubriand, who is now at leisure, to acquaint you, *aimable amie*, henceforward with what concerns himself. We have increased in politeness to each other; but that is, and ought to be, all. I have told him that you had written, and would write to him.

The "Journal des Débats" is devoted to him, and very bitter against the Ministry. I refer you to it. At present, I am somewhat tired of politics, and am going into the country to pass ten days, whence I shall return to Paris to meet Adrien, whom I have had so much pleasure in seeing again.

PARIS, Aug. 2, 1824.

. . . . . .

Your arrival at Naples has been quickly followed by the death of our Ambassador there. We heard of it yesterday. I think you did not know him. That there is talk already of supplying his place, you can readily believe.

Those who have a sweet passion for affecting reconciliations pretend that it should be given to M. de Chateaubriand. Others doubt if he would desire it. If you were here, you might persuade him to accept it perhaps. I will not perpetrate the poor pleasantry of saying, that the hope of seeing you sooner, or of living in that Italy for which you have shown such a predilection, might determine him. Positively, I do not think that he will go there. Mme. de Chateaubriand has departed for Neufchâtel, in Switzerland. It is said that her husband will join her in a few weeks. The courier that is starting for Naples, with the news of the birth of the sixth fine child[1] of the Duchess d'Orleans, born in forty minutes, will not be able to bring you the news of the nomination of Minister of Foreign Affairs. The nomination had been announced for yesterday morning, at St. Cloud; but it will be the end of the week, after the close of the Chambers. I am still of the opinion that M. Clermont Tonnerre will be the man.

Adieu, *aimable amie*. For several days, I have been more certain than ever, that I should not even have to deliberate on any proposal, and that some other circumstances would give even more propriety to an absence of a few months in the winter. You know where my heart would take me; and I would not hesitate a moment, if my mother was not so bitterly opposed to the plan. You may rest assured that my feelings will not allow me to renounce it, unless from an absolute necessity. It would be sweet, perhaps too sweet, to begin the Holy Year with you. Adieu, adieu.

Without pretending to exhaust the letters addressed to Mme. Récamier on the occasion of her illustrious friend's dismissal from the Ministry, I shall cite but one more, received from Queen Hortense:—

ARENENBERG, Sept. 11, 1824.

I expected to hear from you on your return from Naples; and, as I have not heard, I do not know where to find you. I have fancied that you were on the road to Paris; because

[1] Antoine Marie Philippe Louis d'Orleans, Duke de Montpensier, born July 31, 1824.

I always imagine that we go where the heart goes, and where we can be useful to our friends. It is curious to think what a chain the affections are. Why I myself, secluded from the world, stranger to every thing, am sorry to see so distinguished a man shut out from public life. Is it on account of the interest you have made me take in that quarter? or, rather, is it, because, like a Frenchwoman, I love to see merit and superiority honored in my country?

At present, I am no longer alone. I have my cousin with me, — the Grand Duchess of Baden, — a most accomplished person. The brilliancy of her imagination, the vivacity of her wit, the correctness of her judgment, together with the perfect balance of all her faculties, render her a charming and remarkable woman. She enlivens my solitude, and softens my profound grief. We converse in the language of our country: it is that of the heart as you know, since at Rome we understood each other so well. I claim your promise to stop on the way at Arenenberg. It will always be very sweet to me to see you. I cannot separate you from one of my greatest sorrows; which is to say, that you are very dear to me, and that I shall be happy to have an opportunity to assure you of my affection.

HORTENSE.

From Rome, Mme. Récamier went to Naples, where she arrived the 1st of July, in company with her niece, MM. Ballanche and Ampère. Travellers from the North generally visit the South in winter; but it is only by passing a summer in Naples, Sicily, or Greece, that one can have any idea of the splendor of the light in those favored latitudes. Mme. Récamier had an experience of this. Lodging on the Chiaja, and having under her windows the verdure — a little meagre it must be confessed — of the Villa Reale, neither she nor her friends ever tired of the spectacle of those enchanting shores, and that Island of Capri, bathed in golden light, and forming for them the horizon. M. Ballanche, who confessed himself but slightly affected by the sight of the most beautiful works of art, was not insensible to these magnificent beauties of nature; whilst M. Ampère, for whom this journey was but a prelude to long pilgrimages which his insatiable curiosity led him to undertake, enjoyed every thing with all the ardor of his age and character. He was the life of the little party, and a piquant contrast to the meditative contemplation of the philosopher Ballanche.

In the meantime, Mme. Récamier, from the great heat, and her anxiety respecting M. de Chateaubriand, had almost entirely lost her sleep; and, to recover it, she passed every night, for several weeks, at Capo di Monti, on the heights of Naples. In her disposition of mind, she found her most agreeable diversion in visiting the places immortalized by M. de Chateaubriand and Mme. de Staël. She made the tour of the Gulf, and visited Pozzuoli, Baiæ, and the Cape of Misena by sea.

Mme. Récamier could not look again upon these beautiful shores without thinking of Mme. Murat, and one of her first acts was to write to her. After the execution of Murat, his wife, despoiled of her personal property, — which the English, however, had guaranteed to her, — lived several years at the chateau of Raimbourg, near Vienna. Here she devoted all her energies to finishing the education of her four children. She bore the title of Countess de Lipona, — an anagram of the name of the beautiful city where she had reigned. In spite of the constant protection of the all-powerful Prince de Metternich, she solicited in vain the favor — granted to almost all her relatives — of establishing herself at Rome. It was probably thought too near Naples; but she was allowed to live at Trieste, to which place Mme. Récamier wrote, informing her of her intention to visit her before returning to France. She very soon received the following reply: —

THE COUNTESS DE LIPONA TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

TRIESTE, Nov. 11, 1823.

When I saw the date of your letter, I trembled. It is ten years since I have seen the name; and I avoid the recollection of it, not through indifference, but from fear of compromising the persons who showed me devotion, and who are dear to me. Imagine my joy, then, when I recognized the handwriting of my friend Juliette. The letter arrived on my birthday, and was handed me when I awoke; and certainly no bouquet could have been received with more pleasure than your warm expressions of friendship. So you have thought of me! Your loving memories have awakened mine, and I am transported to the time when I enjoyed your society.

I should like to enjoy again the same pleasure. It is only

by word of mouth that I can acquaint you with the persecutions practised upon me in the name of the French Government, and which would take too much time to explain by letter. By a resolution of the 6th of June, passed by the Foreign Ministers, it was decided that I could live neither in Italy, the Low Countries, nor in Switzerland. Germany and America were open to me. By an unexampled piece of injustice, I am forced to travel, to change at each instant my country. At the same time, my own personal property is retained in France and Naples. Judge, then, of my situation at Trieste! You perceive that I can tell you nothing about my future. I am sure that, if I could see you and talk with you, you could on your return to France succeed in obtaining justice for me.

At present, my position is very sad. I have also the grief of being separated from my two sons. The persecutions to which we have been subjected, have forced them to go to America. Achilles has been there two years: my second son left me a fortnight ago. This separation broke my heart; and now I have only my second daughter with me, who is soon to be married.

My isolated situation ought to remove all anxieties, and give me the repose I have long desired and cannot obtain. If they could read my heart, they would see that I only ask for quiet. Still, why should they refuse me what my family has obtained so easily? They are undisturbed at Rome; and they travel, and meet with no annoyances. I alone am persecuted.

I have seen my daughter Letitia,[1] who admires you greatly, which is not astonishing. What does surprise me is to hear that your little niece, who was so delicate (whose portrait I look at, as I write to you), has grown blooming and beautiful. I was touched by the compliments she sends me through my daughter. This is the more amiable, as she was of an age when the absent are forgotten. I am grateful for the Abbé de Rohan's remembrance. If he has no scruples on account of my opinions, say to him that I should like to be remembered in his prayers. Offered up by so good a man as he, they must be listened to. His vocation[2] does not surprise me. Sensitive natures are apt to go to extremes.

Believe, my dear Juliette, that, if you give me the pleasure of embracing you, it will be the greatest happiness I have felt for eleven years.

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[1] Married to the Marquis Pepoli, at Bologna.

[2] In his youth, M. de Rohan had been a gay young nobleman. He became a priest upon the death of his wife, who was burned to death. He converted to the Roman Catholic faith the *femme de chambre* of Mme. Récamier. Both incidents are related in the original. — Ed.

I shall pass the winter at Trieste. A line will tell me whether you have received my letter. I embrace you, my dear Juliette.

CAROLINE.

I will not follow Mme. Récamier in the excursions she made in the environs of Naples with her niece and two faithful companions, searching at Linternum for the tomb of Scipio Africanus, which no one has ever found, visiting Pæstum and Cava, or witnessing the fête of the Madonna di Pié di Giotta; but I will recall the joy with which the devoted friend of M. de Chateaubriand hailed from afar, in a foreign country, the accession of Charles X. to the throne,—an event which seemed to be a happy augury for the pacification of the political relations of the illustrious writer.

The disgraced Minister, who, after the close of the session, had joined his wife in Switzerland, returned immediately to Paris upon hearing of the illness of Louis XVIII., and upon the death of this prince, on the 16th of September, published his pamphlet, "The king is dead: Long live the king!"

CHAPTER XIV.

1824–1826.

Mme. Récamier's return to Rome. — Letter from Matthieu de Montmorency. — The Abbé Canova. — Thorwaldsen and Tenerani. — The bas-relief of Eudora and Cymodocea. — Winter at Rome. — The Duke and Duchess de Noailles. — Mme. Swetchine. — Letter from Mme. Swetchine. — Letter from M. de Montmorency. — Opening of the Year of Jubilee. — Mme. Récamier leaves Rome for Venice. — Visit to Passagno, the birthplace of Canova. — Visit to Mme. Murat. — Letters from Mme. Murat. — Mme. Récamier returns to Paris. — Letter from M. de Montmorency. — First interview with M. de Chateaubriand. — M. de Montmorency elected Member of the French Academy. — Marriage of Mme. Lenormant. — M. de Montmorency is appointed Governor of the Duke de Bordeaux. — Death of M. de Montmorency. — Letters from the Duchess de Broglie and the Duke de Laval.

MME. RÉCAMIER left Naples in the autumn, and returned to Rome, where she hoped to be soon joined by her friend, M. de Montmorency; but the following letter put an end to these expectations: —

MATTHIEU DE MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

La Vallée-aux-Loups, Nov. 15, 1824.

I am going, *aimable amie*, to write to you a few lines from my charming valley, where there are so many memories of you, and where I shall remain five days, before abandoning it for several months. You have already heard, through Adrien, of the change in my plans, which, for me, has been truly very painful. He will have told you, that my plan of travel was already laid out, and my trunks half packed. My heart was already anticipating the day of my arrival in the immortal city, where I would have nothing more pressing to do than to be guided to your modest and pleasant retreat, when, all of a sudden, these sweet hopes vanished away.

I lacked courage to brave the extreme and truly unreasonable sorrow of my mother, and to leave her a little unwell, attributing her indisposition to the effect of my departure, and saying that I should never see her again, with that severe and maternal tone which would have rendered me the most unhappy

of men, if she had been really ill in my absence. I think that you would have done the same in my place. I had been proof against all the persuasions of political friends, the majority of whom were opposed to this journey; but I was weak against a feeling which my mother herself confessed was unreasonable. But the image of Rome, and more especially your image, together with this Holy Year, which was not enough my motive for the good Providence to remove the obstacles which I always foresaw, all appeal to me incessantly. Pity me. I had already apprised Mme. de Broglie of my intention to take Coppet on my way, and give myself some hours at a place both dear and painful to me, but which I have long desired to visit.[1] She consented to meet me there; and I have thanked her, by the last courier, for her kindness, telling her at the same time, that I could not profit by it.

I am not in a mood, *aimable amie*, to talk to you of politics. Have you been deceived, like all Paris, by an article in the "Journal des Débats," in which M. de Salvandy dared to imitate M. de Chateaubriand, and drew upon himself some compliments?

No: you can never know how much I regret that I cannot pass the winter with you, and, under your pleasant auspices, be introduced to the most beautiful marvels of art. Pity me; do me justice; and believe in an affection that will last as long as my life. Have you read the last pamphlet of one of your friends?[2] I do not think that he has taken the wisest course.

Upon Mme. Récamier's arrival in Rome the preceding year, she had eagerly sought out the Abbé Canova. She found him in the same apartments that he had shared with his brother in 1813, leading the same life, and waited upon by the same servants. The work-rooms and the studio of the great artist were still open to visitors. Artisans were at work on several figures, modelled by Canova, and ordered by Russia and England. Mme. Récamier saw again the bust that Canova had made of her from memory. It was one of the last things upon which the artist had worked. Upon perceiving with what emotion Mme. Récamier contemplated it, the good Abbé conceived the idea of offering it to her, and he sent it to the Abbaye-aux-Bois immediately upon her return to France.

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[1] Mme. de Staël was buried at Coppet, by the side of M. and Mme. Necker.

[2] A short pamphlet, entitled "Abolition of the Censorship."

Since the death of Canova, the sceptre had passed into the hands of Thorwaldsen. This artist, who had quite as much tact as talent, managed to gain the favor of the Italians; while, at the same time, he was the pride of the nations of the North. His compositions have originality, and his style is not without grandeur. Among the young men who frequented his *atelier*, he early distinguished Pietro Tenerani, who now, in his old age, is incontestably the first sculptor of Italy.

How much Thorwaldsen may have owed to the assistance of Tenerani has never been known, since the latter, full of gratitude toward his master, and distinguished moreover as much for his delicacy of feeling as his genius, always repelled any inuendoes that attributed to him the finishing of the finest works of Thorwaldsen. One thing is incontestable: after the death of the Danish sculptor, Tenerani produced admirable works of all kinds, — remarkable, when looked upon in the light of their conception; and peculiarly valuable for their noble, true, and delicate execution.

In visiting the *atelier* of Thorwaldsen, in the Piazza Barberini, and that of his favorite pupil, it occurred to Mme. Récamier to perpetuate in marble one of the poetical creations of M. de Chateaubriand; and, giving the preference to Tenerani, she proposed to him to execute for her a bas-relief, the subject to be taken from the poem of The Martyrs.

The artist joyfully accepted her commission, and promptly began the work; and his *atelier* became the frequent resort of Mme. Récamier and her friends. Situated as the former was toward M. de Chateaubriand, and full of painful anxiety in regard to his present troubled position, which she was powerless to rectify or improve in any way, she took pleasure in following with interest the progress of a work designed to honor, in a durable form, a glorious name that was precious to her, — a name that would survive all the storms, ambitions, and controversies in which he himself was then involved.

The bas-relief represented the martyrdom of Eudora and Cymodocea, condemned to be delivered up to wild

beasts in the Coliseum. It was finished in 1828, while M. de Chateaubriand was Ambassador at Rome. Its price was thirty-six hundred francs. This admirable, and, I believe, only specimen of Tenerani's work in France was bequeathed by Mme. Récamier to the Museum of St. Malo.

Mme. Récamier's second winter in Rome, though not less animated, was passed in a different manner from the first. The approach of the Jubilee brought there a large number of travellers, and among them a party of French of high rank: the Baron and Baroness de Montmorency, Countess d'Hautefort, M. and Mme. Boissy, the Chevalier de Pinieu, and the Duke de Noailles and his young wife, who was formerly Mlle. de Montmart. Mme. Récamier met the duke and duchess at the Duke de Laval's; but she did not become intimate with them until some years later. It was of the duke that she made the remark, that "he was the last and the youngest of those to whom she had accorded the title of a true friend." Besides this party, there was another of Russians, no less numerous or brilliant; among them the Countess de Nesselrode, whom Mme. Récamier was delighted to meet again; and Mme. Swetchine, whose noble heart and fine intellect she quickly recognized.

Mme. Swetchine was very interesting, and sometimes eloquent in conversation; and the character of her mind, which was absorbed at that time in philosophic speculations, had a peculiar charm for M. Ballanche. That worthy man, however, accustomed to live in the freest regions of metaphysics, was either too obscure or too subtile for his interlocutor. Mme. Swetchine had arrived in Rome, imbued with some prejudices against Mme. Récamier. These were immediately dissipated, when she became personally known to her; and were transformed into a warm affection, as will be seen by the following characteristic letter: —

MME. SWETCHINE TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Saturday, 1825.

Here we are at Naples, having fortunately escaped the perils of the route; which, especially at this time, are far from being chimerical. We have been favored with the finest of

weather; no disquietudes, no delays. All has been pleasant to me, except the going away from Rome. Now that the weather has cleared up, and the temperature become milder, I the more regret having prevented you from coming. It was complete unselfishness on my part; but my regret is greater than my satisfaction at my disinterestedness. Yet I always desire to act thus toward you: it seems to me that we are always compensated for a voluntary sacrifice by being spared some trouble of which we have a greater dread, and, when you find me generous, say to yourself that the secret of my conduct is almost a superstitious calculation. Our being thrown together, our rapid impressions, my joy, my pain, all seem to me like a dream. Would that I had always dreamed! I was a captive, before I thought of defending myself. I yielded at once to that fascinating, indefinable charm, to which you subject even those in whom you yourself are not interested. If we had both been deceiving ourselves, I should be inconsolable, and my judgment would not be without reproach; but what signifies it to have been prudent, when one is very unhappy! I miss you as though we had long been companions, and had many recollections in common. Why should we feel the loss of what yesterday we did not possess? It would be inexplicable, if there were not a little eternity in certain feelings. One might say, that souls, coming in contact with each other, are emancipated from all the conditions of our poor existence; and that, freer and happier, they obey already the laws of a better world.

We arrived here yesterday at nightfall: very soon afterward, the moon rose over this beautiful gulf. To-day I have seen the sun rise, and have only quitted the enchanting spectacle to write to you. *Mon Dieu*, how you must have suffered here! I have already said to myself a hundred times, that those things which satisfy our love of the beautiful also excite in us more strongly that craving for happiness, which is never extinguished but with the end of happiness itself. In vain we ask ourselves, by what mystery of ingratitude we are not satisfied with admiring, — if it is necessary to possess all to enjoy any thing. Suffering alone replies, perhaps. Have you not also felt this? Sometimes natures the most alike respond differently to the same influences. You have been very kind to me, — very kind in words and manner; but what most touched me were those impulses toward a confidence which you have not yet been inclined to give me.

When you know me better, you will not even dream of contesting with me the right to know all. It will then be only an act of justice: now it is a favor; and I am like a great many

people, I prefer to receive a favor than deserve a favor. I would already give all I have, and all that I have not, to know that you are happy. May you soon be so without my aid! but, as for your troubles, I stoutly claim the right to share them. Believe me, there is no claim better established; and I am determined to make the most of it.

This letter, as you perceive, is simply meant to continue our last conversation, which left upon me an impression both sweet and sad. I will not talk to you of any thing else, because I can think of nothing else; and you will not require me to tear myself away from you, precisely because I am writing to you. Surely, that would be very hard. We talk about too many indifferent things, even with people in whom we take no interest.

Give my regards to the Duke de Laval, whom I remember both kindly and gratefully. I am relying wholly upon his kind offices, since he will have for a reward the pleasure and the recollection of a good action.

Mme. Récamier having reproached M. de Montmorency for not having written to her for some weeks, she received from him the following letter: —

PARIS, Jan. 26, 1825.

I received a few days ago, *aimable amie*, your letter of the 11th, which pained me, because you were grieved. But truly you are unjust in reproaching me with my supposed indifference, and with a forgetfulness far from my heart. You also accuse me of sacrificing friendship to politics and affairs, which have never so little occupied me as now. In this respect, I am quiet. I do not busy myself with the affairs of the Chamber, or any matters discussed in society, except so far as is unavoidable while living in Paris. This last circumstance does not depend upon me; at least, upon my free will. Can you doubt this, *aimable amie*, after my letters, — that have not been all replies, — and after what Adrien told you of my wishes. I wish you could read my heart, often filled with regret when I think of you, and receive your letters, — even the reproachful ones.

I executed your commission in regard to your friend René, who had received the Greek letter. You ask me why I do not influence him. I thought that you had a truer idea of our relations to each other, and the way our *liaison*, as Adrien calls it, is to be understood. There is no intimacy or true confidence between us; and there cannot be, after our rivalry, and the estimate I put upon his friendship — even politically — for

me. We neither of us wish to quarrel: in regard to certain qualities, we do each other justice, — all this, with phrases more or less gracious or polite, according to circumstances; but these have been colder since the late events, and a certain similarity in our positions, with great differences, which the men who do not like him are too fond of dwelling upon. He does not ask the slightest advice from me; neither does he give me any information about his plans. In regard to the latter, he addressed himself to Adrien, with whom afterward he expressed himself as little satisfied.

I have executed your commissions in respect to our common friends, and to the duke father[1] (of whom you say nothing pleasanter than I think), and to the son (with whom I continue to have friendly family relations; though our political relations are less cordial).

Ah, our pleasant evenings! When will they return? When shall I be able to revenge myself for your unjust manner of judging me? You see that I take that much to heart. I must finish by offering you a trifling present of a necklace and bracelets,[2] — a little sombre; but in keeping with your sorrow as a Frenchwoman, and with the seriousness of one who is going to perform her jubilee. Much love to Amelia, of whom you say nothing.

At last, the holy door was opened at St. Peter's by a blow from the hammer of the Sovereign Pontiff. This ceremony, very imposing from the influx of the faithful from all points of the globe, together with visits to the churches and to the almshouses, crowded with poor pilgrims, whose feet the grandest ladies in Rome kneeled to wash and wipe, occupied the last weeks of Mme. Récamier's sojourn in Rome. She left, with her niece and M. Ballanche, in Quasimodo Week. Before going to Trieste, she determined to visit Venice, where she stayed eight days. Here their party was joined by M. Charles Lenormant, the affianced husband of Mme. Récamier's niece. He was their guide through the palaces, churches, picture and sculpture galleries, of which Venice may well be proud. He then left, to rejoin them soon in France.

From Padua, Mme. Récamier, with M. Ballanche and

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[1] Duke de Doudeauville.

[2] A set of jet. The Court was in mourning for Louis XVIII.

her niece, went to Bassano, where they were met by the good Abbé Canova, who was to conduct them to Passagno, the birthplace of his brother. Canova had been devotedly attached to this village, where he owned a modest dwelling; and he had bequeathed a large part of his fortune to the building of a monumental church there, in which he desired to be interred. The Abbé, with a touching zeal, carried out his wishes.

The road to Passagno was undergoing repairs: it also rained in torrents; and it required a great deal of enthusiasm for the memory of the illustrious dead, and a true desire to please a friend, to accomplish such an expedition.

Passagno, where the house of the great man is kept in all its primitive simplicity, has nothing to distinguish it from other Venetian villages. The Abbé took Mme. Récamier to the little church, soon to be replaced by the new one. It had no ornament to relieve its bareness, except a picture of the eminent sculptor, placed above the high altar.

After dinner, the Abbé took the party back again to Bassano, under the same conditions of bad roads and torrents of rain. Mme. Récamier did not see him again for many years. He made his last journey to France in 1840. The church where the body of his glorious brother reposes, was then finished; and he had received from the Sovereign Pontiff the title of Bishop of Myndus.

Mme. Récamier's party reached Trieste on the 8th of May, at eleven in the evening; and, notwithstanding the hour, Mme. Récamier wished to be immediately conducted to the residence of the dethroned queen, for whom she cherished so affectionate a respect. Mme. Murat had just gone to bed; and her joy was inexpressible at the sight of the friend she had so long desired and so little expected to see. The interview was a protracted one; and, in the meanwhile, M. Ballanche, who had accompanied Mme. Récamier, was left forgotten in a corridor, where, absorbed in some noble and philanthropic subject of meditation, he walked up and down, unmindful of the valets who were snoring around him. Early the next morning, this note

came from the queen, accompanied by a bouquet of beautiful flowers: —

TRIESTE, Monday morning, May 9, 1825.

I send you, my dear and kind Juliette, these flowers for good morning. I wish I could enjoy the pleasure every day; but you are going away, and my happiness will be transitory: yet, nevertheless, it will leave behind sweet remembrances.

Please say to your kind travelling companion, that I was extremely sorry to find that he had been left over an hour in the corridors with my servants: but, with his appreciation of you, he will readily comprehend my pleasure in seeing you again, and consequently my absorption; and will excuse me for having neglected a person whom I had not the pleasure of knowing.

What a day I am going to pass, dear Juliette! Pray, tell your niece how impatient I am to see her. My daughter will not forgive me for not having waked her. You will be the cause of the first tiff we ever had. I embrace you, my dear Juliette. CAROLINE.

P.S. — Let me know, through my servant, at what hour you want the carriage, and what your plans are for to-day.

Mme. Murat sent her carriage; and the party proceeded to her house, after a breakfast at the hotel. Upon their arrival, Mme. Récamier presented to the queen M. Ballanche and her niece: and, in her turn, Mme. Murat introduced her second daughter, the Princess Louise, who shortly afterward married Count Rasponi; and General Macdonald, who had been aide-de-camp to King Joachim, and Minister during the regency of Queen Caroline. He had never left the widow and children of his old master, and was now their only friend and courtier in adversity.

The queen, whose skin was as fair as a lily, was still singularly pretty, almost retaining the brilliancy of her youth. She had grown stout; and, as she was not tall, her figure had not gained in elegance. She was animated in conversation; and, from her caressing manners, it was easy to see, that, when she wished to please, she could exercise great powers of fascination.

Her intercourse with her daughter was full of the most confiding tenderness. Her bearing to General Macdonald was affectionate, with a shade of authority. To her guests,

and Mme. Récamier in particular, she manifested a warmth and gratitude that proved, alas! how few disinterested marks of sympathy she had received since her misfortunes. But, excepting at dinner and during a drive, there was not much opportunity for observation; as Mme. Murat, who calculated with sadness the short time Mme. Récamier could give her, arranged matters so as to have a tête-à-tête with her of twelve hours.

On the 10th of May, Mme. Récamier set out for Paris. Upon her arrival, she found she had been preceded by a letter from Mme. Murat, expressive of her love and gratitude: —

TRIESTE, May 11, 1825.

You are now far from me, dear Juliette; and I ask myself whether my happiness in embracing you was only a dream. It was very fleeting; and now I have only the anxiety of knowing, that you are travelling and ill. I fear that, in my love, I overtaxed your strength; and, from not wishing to lose any of the time you could give me, I aggravated your indisposition. You have had also to suffer from the extreme heat and the rain. Since you left, the weather has changed: winter has returned, and you will feel the severity of the frosts in approaching the Simplon. Let me hear from you, dear and kind Juliette. I trust you will be able to re-assure me as to your health. Louise has told me how unwell your pretty niece was during that last day and evening, which appeared so long to her and so short to me. I hope that she has recovered from her indisposition: give her my love and regrets. Do not forget also to remember me to M. Ballanche. Adieu, my dear Juliette, and believe me in the constancy of my affection. I can never forget the touching proof you have given me of yours.

CAROLINE.

Mme. Récamier returned from Italy the last of May, 1825, after an absence of eighteen months. It was just at the coronation of Charles X.; and she found neither the Duke de Montmorency nor M. de Chateaubriand in Paris: they had gone to Rheims to attend the ceremony.

M. de Chateaubriand returned several days before the king, and consequently before M. de Montmorency, who followed the Court to Compiègne, where the king stopped to hunt. To his lively impatience to see the dear friend from whom he had been separated so long was added a

great desire to know what passed between M. de Chateaubriand and her at the first interview: —

M. DE MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

COMPIÈGNE, June 2, 1825.

I received this morning, *aimable amie*, a letter for you from Adrien, which I will not retain even for a few days, but send you at once, profiting by the opportunity to assure you of my love and faithful remembrance. This will make you ashamed, if you do not write to me a line before Monday. As for me, I am counting the days before I shall have the happiness of seeing you. I am writing to you from the little house of poor Berthault,[1] which you formerly inhabited, and which has become our pleasure-house. I come here to read and write while the king is hunting. Adieu, adieu. How is Amelia? I earnestly hope that our summer will benefit her.

You will let me know, when you have seen the melancholy René for the first time, how the interview went off.

A line from Mme. Récamier apprised M. de Chateaubriand of her return. He hastened to the Abbaye the same day, at his usual hour, as though he had been there the evening before. No word of explanation or of reproach was exchanged; but, in seeing with what joy he resumed the old habits, what respectful tenderness and perfect confidence he testified toward her, Mme. Récamier was convinced, that Heaven had blessed her self-imposed sacrifice; and she felt the sweet certainty, that henceforward the friendship of M. de Chateaubriand, free from storms, would be what she had always desired it to be, — unchangeable; because calm as a good conscience, and pure as virtue.

M. Ballanche, who sympathized with all of Mme. Récamier's feelings, predicted this result in a letter he wrote to her from Pisa the preceding March, during an absence of eight days: —

March 12, 1825.

I very much doubt if your resentment will last long: there are some things too repugnant to our natures, and gentleness is certainly your characteristic. The melancholy which absorbs him does not astonish me. The object to which he has devoted his public life is accomplished. He has outlived himself, and

[1] The architect who had planned Mme. Récamier's mansion in the Rue du Mont Blanc.

nothing is sadder than to outlive one's self. In order not to do this, one must fall back upon the moral sentiment. Consequently, he will find his best refuge in your sweet compassion. I hope that you will convert him to the moral sentiment: you will make him understand that the finest faculties, the most brilliant fame, are but as dust, if they receive no life from the moral sentiment.

Mme. Récamier was keenly alive to the joy of being again in the midst of her family and friends. Providence accorded to her one of those moments of almost perfect happiness which are never of long duration. Time seemed to have respected, during her absence, the three old men dependent upon her for ease and comfort. Satisfied with her relations with all her friends, she was on the eve of insuring — by a marriage of inclination, and which involved for her no separation — a happy future to her adopted daughter. One thing only delayed this marriage, —a positive career for M. Lenormant, which soon presented itself.

Soon after her return, M. de Montmorency was obliged to leave Paris on his annual tour among his family connections. During this absence, he wrote to the recluse of the Abbaye-aux-Bois: —

ESCLYMONT, July 3, 1825.

Already eight days have elapsed, *aimable amie*, since I abandoned Paris, and the sweet habit of never finishing my day without visiting the modest asylum of the Abbaye-aux-Bois. It seems to me, that we also fixed the term of eight days as the minimum of our correspondence. Do you dream of fulfilling this engagement, to which I attach so much value? or are you waiting for me to fulfil the pleasant and easy duty of writing first? In the meanwhile, what shall I tell you that you do not know beforehand, — of my regrets; of the unchangeable affection that nothing can alter, neither absences of several weeks, nor terrible journeys of two years? Shall I interest you more by talking of a peaceable life in an old chateau, where many loved ones are gathered; where I read and walk more than in Paris? But I think no less of you, and miss the ending of my evenings.

But you, *aimable amie*, have you not many things to tell me of that capital, the seat of so many political, financial, and literary interests? While waiting for the courier you are to send to me, give me some news of your melancholy friend, whose affairs (so it seems to me) do not make much progress since his

last escapades, which will have baffled the measures of another friend.[1]

You are more peaceable and more uncertain, in spite of the piquant bringings-together and curious conversations that you favor in your pretty room. There is another negotiation in which I have a more lively interest, and which I should like to have been the one to open. My mother-in-law asked me about it with much interest this very morning. She would advise you to try the grand audience, of which you once spoke to me. You can decide whether it must be urged on, or whether you had better await our return. Remember me always to M. Lenormant, and, if you will permit me to join their names together, to Amelia, whose health, I trust, gives you satisfaction.

BONNÉTABLE, July 30, 1825.

Since the departure of the last courier, I have wished to thank you for your letter of the 11th, which gave me great pleasure. Your regrets go to my heart; and I am very sorry not to be able to reply, by indicating a settled and speedy return: but you will feel that it is impossible for me not to give some little time to two estates which are forty leagues apart, and which, for this reason, I visit very rarely. The very heat, which I fear troubles you in a city like Paris, would be no reason for shortening my absence; because we are waiting for it to moderate a little before leaving this old chateau, that offers us at least some protection by its thick walls, and by keeping its very few windows closed.

I have arranged a little excursion and visit to a prison of considerable importance, on the way to my other estate; which at least is known to you, and where you have stayed. On that account, it has a great advantage over this. A few days ago, I re-read what our friend has said, in her "Ten Years of Exile," of our house of La Forest.

Our love has had a sad anniversary[2] to celebrate since we parted. How closely also do I associate you with it! Thoughts of you are ever mingled with my eternal regrets; and so truly, that I have just found out my mistake in thinking that you were at La Forest with our friend. You remained at Fossé; and I much regret, that the only one of our residences that you know is the Vallée-aux-Loups, with which you sometimes associate, perhaps, another memory than mine.

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[1] Mme. de Duras, who still flattered herself that she could bring about a reconciliation between M. de Villèle and M. de Chateaubriand.

[2] The anniversary of the death of Mme. de Staël, 14th July. M. de Montmorency never allowed it to pass by unnoticed.

Do you know, one of the things that make absence displeasing to me is this perpetual assiduity of the ancient owner; and, if he is going to have a vein of generous independence, if he is going, as is announced, to write some fine pages — of which he is capable — for an interesting cause, you, perhaps, will be prodigiously touched by it! I stand the chance of some variation. After all, I have smiled at some lines which have followed a certain negotiation. What I think very beautiful, in a serious aspect, but what I should never have supposed, is that his wife should please you. I esteem her; but she has never made upon me any other impression.

As to your interesting young man, I treat that subject very seriously. I do not like to have you despair, and look upon his future, and that of your charming niece, in so gloomy a light. Ah, if I only knew, and had the power, to alleviate those troubles which you are putting off telling me about until we meet!

Adieu, *aimable amie:* do not neglect me too long; and send your letters to the Hôtel de Luynes.

In a subsequent letter, dated from Vendôme, M. de Montmorency writes: —

"I have received the pamphlet, which had many claims on my interest. The subject itself inspires a great deal. The talent displayed is ever the same, though it is somewhat spoiled by mixing up a political note and a piece of sentiment: it is neither one thing nor the other. I did not the less think the criticisms upon it contemptible, — the 'Journal de Paris' in particular. I did not need to read the pamphlet in order to have, what you would consider, the proper feeling respecting the late news of the taking of Tripolitza. How very unfortunate it was for the Greeks!"

The pamphlet to which M. de Montmorency alludes, was one of many that the author of the "Genius of Christianity" devoted to the noble cause of Greece, which Mme. Recamier had been among the first to espouse warmly. The young Canaris, whom the Hellenic Committee were educating at Paris, passed almost all his holidays at the Abbaye-aux-Bois.

The month of September was spent by Mme. Récamier in the charming retirement of the Vallée-aux-Loups, her usual retreat, when she needed change of air and quiet. On this occasion, M. de Montmorency said to her, "I am

charmed that the presence of friendship should from time to time consecrate this valley."

In the autumn of this year (Nov. 3, 1825), M. de Montmorency was elected a member of the French Academy. From its foundation, the Academy admitted as members a certain number of great lords, who imparted to the institution an air of distinction, and, to borrow an expression of M. Ballanche, gave it "a perfume of the lady's chamber," which, until the present time, has always been one of the characteristic features of fine epochs in our literature. M. de Montmorency was one of the last of these noblemen. He prized highly the honor, but would not receive the usual pension. This he was anxious to give to some person more deserving of the name of a man of letters. He communicated his ideas to Mme. Récamier, who greatly approved of them, and promised to aid him in the choice of a person to whom to offer the pension. Mme. Récamier, prompt and firm in her decisions on important things, liked to consult others on trifles. This matter of the pension, therefore, was discussed by all the circle at the Abbaye-aux-Bois; and each proposed and extolled his candidate. At the suggestion of M. de Latouche, editor of "André Chenier," it was finally offered to Mme. Desbordes-Valmore, a poet, and wife of an actor, who refused it from motives of independence. M. de Montmorency and Mme. Récamier were not inclined to let the matter drop, as the simple and dignified refusal of Mme. Desbordes-Valmore only excited their interest the more; and they obtained for her, from the crown, a pension of a thousand francs.

In the meanwhile, M. Lenormant had been appointed Inspector of Fine Arts, subject to the direction of the Viscount de La Rochefoucauld; and, on the 1st of February, 1826, Mme. Récamier witnessed the consummation of her wishes in the marriage of her adopted daughter.

A fortnight before, on the 11th of January, M. de Montmorency received the title of Governor of His Royal Highness the Duke de Bourdeaux. This choice met with the universal approbation of the public. M. de Montmorency was profoundly flattered and gratified by this signal

mark of confidence; and, without being frightened at the heavy responsibility, he entered with zeal upon his new duties; and, in his speech on his reception at the French Academy, expressed himself nobly in regard to them. M. de Chateaubriand read at this sitting the first part of the discourse which serves as an introduction to the history of France. This was M. de Chateaubriand's first appearance in public since his dismissal from the Ministry. He did it to give more interest to the sitting, and to grace the triumph of the man who had been his rival.

This, if ever, was the time when the friends of M. de Montmorency had reason to feel satisfied with the position he had made for himself, and the respect paid to his character. He was seemingly in perfect health: still he was slightly indisposed at the beginning of Holy Week; but he treated the illness lightly, and it did not prevent him from attending service at his parish church, St. Thomas Aquinas, on Good Friday, March 24.

While he was prostrate at the foot of the tomb of his Divine Saviour, his noble head was suddenly bent lower, as though in an excess of fervor. Those about him feared at first to disturb his pious meditations; but it was soon perceived that he had ceased to live. Mme. Récamier, almost immediately apprised of the sad event, hastened to mingle her tears with those of his wife and mother. The next day she received from the Duchess de Broglie this sympathizing note: —

Holy Saturday, 1826.

Ah, *mon Dieu, mon Dieu!* Dear friend, what an event! How I pity you! My heart bleeds for you. All the past comes back to me, and I think what my poor mother's grief would have been, and picture to myself your suffering, which must be terrible.

But what a beautiful death! Just such as he himself would have chosen. The hand of God is in it, — that Saviour God whose sacrifice he was celebrating. He is now with him. Dear friend, let me hear from you: tell me when I can see you; I want to weep with and for you. I embrace you, whilst committing you to that God who has recalled to Himself our poor friend.

Some days later, she received a letter from the Duke de

Laval, who, like her, had thus lost his best friend and counsellor.

PALO, April 9, 1826.

I received, in the retreat where my grief sought refuge, your letter, so full of the same sorrow. I thank you, dear friend, for addressing yourself to me in your grief. If your distressed and broken heart needs the sympathy of another as unhappy as yourself, you are right in thinking of me.

You knew all the beauty of his life, as you know all the weakness of mine; and you understand the secret of that friendship which I have cherished for him from childhood.

Was there ever an affection more fraternal, sympathetic, and unchangeable? I say it to you, dear friend, — I avow it without any false modesty, — all the actions of my life for which I deserve any merit or honor are those which I shared in common with my angelic friend.

I read over and over your sweet, sad letter. You appreciate to its fullest extent what you have lost; and, as time goes on, we shall both of us, I am sincerely convinced, have a deeper sense of our bereavement. For the five or six days since I received the fatal news, my heart has been torn, and old wounds have re-opened.[1] It is a state truly worthy of pity.

He alone is happy: there is no doubt of that. From heaven, he looks down upon our tears, our desolation, our homage. He will be our protector on high, as he was our friend and support on earth.

We shall probably see each other several months this summer. For me to come to Paris is the greatest effort and sacrifice which I can make to the wishes of the small remnant of my family.

I have an invincible repugnance to the step. Paris, to me, is only the tomb of all my hopes, of my consolations, and of all our generations.

I tender you my warmest, most sympathetic love; and I beg that you will continue to write to me.

A year after, the duke wrote again to Mme. Récamier: —

ROME, April 8, 1827.

I thank you very kindly for your letter of the 16th of March. I will not reproach you for your long silence. We have agreed, that this silence, ever hurtful to friendship, and which often

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[1] The Duke de Laval lost his son a few years previous.

kills it, was no injury to yours, by an exception which only holds good in your case.

Consequently, I like to think — it is a matter of feeling, more than of reasoning — that so many years of confidence, intimacy, and friendship between us, cannot possibly go for nothing. The misfortunes and losses that have overwhelmed us, and especially the last, — which we have so tenderly and painfully shared, — guarantee to us an unchangeable friendship; which has been strengthened and maintained by common memories and regrets.

We are entering upon a sad season, into a Holy Week, which more especially brings back memories of that angelic friend whose example we must still imitate in order to deserve the heavenly crown he has obtained. What you tell me of the poor widow,[1] who has taken refuge in the country, and who does good, she says, without finding any charm in it, is truly very sad and touching. Such magnificence in her charities, accompanied by such hard personal peculiarities, confounds me; and evinces a most singular composition of character, much to be pitied. Such pitiless sorrow, having reference to but one object, without any need of communion with or compassion for others, fills me with melancholy. What a contrast her grief is to that of his mother (my poor aunt), who is of a very different nature, — loveable and amiable; and whose sorrow is attractive from the recklessness of its despair!

What a poor, unhappy, almost annihilated family is mine! This is the reason a distant clime, a foreign soil, is more congenial to me.

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[1] Duchess Matthieu de Montmorency, who resided on her estate of Bonnétable.

CHAPTER XV.

1826–1828

Mme. Récamier's intimacy with Mme. de Montmorency. — Prayer composed by M. de Chateaubriand. — Letters from Mme. de Chateaubriand. — Change in the Ministry. — M. de Chateaubriand appointed Ambassador to Rome — Death of M. Bernard. — Letter from the Duke de Laval. — Letter of M. de Chateaubriand to Count de La Ferronnays. — Departure of M. de Chateaubriand for Rome — His letters on the way. — His letters from Rome relating to Guérin, Tenerani, and the bas-relief of Cymodocea.

THE void that M. de Montmorency's death left in Mme. Récamier's heart and life was never filled. What, indeed, could replace that affection, at once so pure and so tender; that deep interest in the moral and Christian perfection of her whom he loved? In the desire of cherishing every thing connected with the friend she mourned, Mme. Récamier was impelled naturally to seek, more than she had ever done, the society of the Duchess Matthieu de Montmorency, who found so much comfort in the sympathy lavished upon her, that she became tenderly attached to her husband's friend. The duchess engaged a room at the Abbaye-aux-Bois, to which, for a year or two, she frequently came for the purpose of prayer and seclusion, and to see her more freely who alone knew how to soften what was bitter and concentrated in her grief.

The youth of M. de Montmorency, as we have already said, had been given up to an ardent passion; and, after the birth of his daughter Elisa (since Countess de La Rochefoucauld), he separated from his wife. Upon his conversion, he still lived many years without renewing his relations with the woman who bore his name, and whose piety and virtues rendered her worthy of his respect. The death of Henri de Montmorency, only son of the Duke

de Laval, sole heir of the great name of which they were both so proud; and the hope that a new branch might renew the noble house, threatened with extinction, — brought Matthieu de Montmorency and his wife together in 1819. The much-desired heir was not granted to him; but Mme. de Montmorency, who had so long lived in loneliness, felt that her affection for her husband had redoubled, and her grief at his death was almost fierce. She sought consolation only in religion, and settled herself for life at her estate of Bonnétable, where she zealously devoted herself to a life of charity and good works. Mme. Récamier went twice to see her, and Mme. de Montmorency wrote to her frequently.

After the death of her husband, finding that the reading, and even the sight, of the letters that she had received from him only irritated her sorrow, she gave them to Mme. Récamier.

DUCHESS MATTHIEU DE MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

BONNÉTABLE, Sept. 5, 1827.

It is I, madame, who would be the ungrateful one, if I should use such an expression in referring to your long silence. You assuredly owe me nothing; but you understood me so well during that painful period, that I felt one pang the more at being deprived of that kind interest and sympathy, which in my extreme grief permitted me to open my heart to you, and rely upon you for support. I was going to say, in my *eternal grief:* but no; for God permits me to hope, that it will not endure beyond my own sad life. Will not the prayers of him, whom I hope is happy, be efficacious for her whom he left in so pitiable a condition, and whose only study is to try and merit the reward of joining him as quickly as possible? All my charitable establishments, all my labors, and even my occupations (which may have the air of diversions in the eyes of a heartless world, so little used to legitimate and sincere feelings), tend to one sole end.

The foundation of my hospital is laid. Before the end of the year, it will be built; and, by next Lent, I shall place the sick there. I want them to be in by Good Friday, and the hospital consecrated to the cross. I am working for eternity. It is a good stimulus, is it not?

I only propose coming to Paris to weep with Adrien. As

soon as I hear of his arrival, I shall go, and pass three or four days there only. I shall at least try to see you (do not doubt it), but not at your residence. I am afraid I should not have the courage to mount that stairway of which he has spoken to me so often. He was always in such haste to see you!

So you have at last examined those affecting verses and precious letters. You must have inspired me with a great confidence to move me to give them to you. You have been able to get a glimpse of the happiness I must have enjoyed, and, consequently, of what must now be my grief, my privation, my isolation.

But adieu, dear madame. I always finish by returning to the same subject. Pardon me. You have understood my regrets and sorrows. He loved you so much! If I do not dare to place myself on the same footing with him, at least never doubt of my tender and constant interest.

When I see your name in the journals and in other works, I am pleased at the friendly sentiments always expressed in your favor: they go right to my heart. Ah! madame, strive still harder to join in heaven him who has so well deserved to enter at once into that blissful state.

Sunday, 1827.

I am certain, madame, that you are sad and afflicted on account of the death of M. de Staël. I knew him; and I also am far from being indifferent to it. I saw much of him. He was born the same year and month as my daughter, and was beloved by him who is no more. And then, how much there is to dread in his death! Ah, what a terrible thing it is to fear for the salvation of those dear to us! I will tell you frankly, madame, that you cannot believe how much I am interested in your welfare for this life, but still more so for eternity. This word says all. You are so kind to me; he loved you so much; and you also loved him: such claims go straight to the place where my heart was, — that broken heart, which beat only for him! I know not if I still have one; yet, when I think of you, I believe I have.

After the death of M. de Montmorency, M. de Chateaubriand, wishing to associate himself with Mme. Récamier's grief, composed for her a prayer. The title in the original is plural: thus it is probable that the plan included other similar compositions; but I am very certain that this is the only one of the kind that M. de Chateaubriand wrote:

CHRISTIAN PRAYERS.

FOR SOME AFFLICTIONS OF LIFE.

On the loss of a dear friend.

I feel that my soul is wearied of life; for my heart is desolate and bereft, and the joy of my days is gone from me.

My God, why hast Thou taken away *him* (or *her*) who was so dear to me? Happy he who has never been born; for he knows neither heart-troubles nor the sinkings of the soul. What have I done, O Lord! to be afflicted thus? Our friendship, our interviews, the mutual confidences, — were they not perfectly innocent? And why lay Thy hand so heavily upon a worm? O my God! pardon the madness of my grief. I feel that I complain unjustly of Thy severity. Absorbed in this beguiling friendship, did I not forget Thee? did I not bestow upon the creature a love due only to the Creator? In seeing me in love with perishable dust, Thy anger was roused: Thou sawest that I had cast my heart on the waters, and that the waters, in their flow, would sweep it away to the bottom of the abyss. Eternal Being, before whom, the only permanent and solid reality, all vanishes away, Thou alone art worthy of love. Thou only canst satisfy the insatiable desires of man, whom Thou bearest in Thy hands. In loving Thee, no more inquietudes, no more fears of losing the object of our choice. In that love are comprehended ardor, strength, sweetness, and infinite hope. In contemplating Thee, O Beauty Divine! the entranced soul feels that Thou art the only one over whom death has no power.

But, O miracle of goodness! in Thy bosom I find again the virtuous friend whom I have lost. Through Thee and in Thee my love for him is renewed; and my whole being, in giving itself up to Thee, shall find itself united to that of my friend. Our holy attachment will partake then of Thy eternity.

Some weeks before the death of M. de Montmorency, Mme. de Chateaubriand, whose health, always delicate, had been much shaken by her husband's difficulties, left Paris for the south of France, whence she wrote to Mme. Récamier to commend to her her dear Infirmary, founded by her sagacious and active charity: —

LA SEYNE, near TOULON, March 2, 1826.

I cannot allow the courier to leave, madame, without expressing to you my regrets and my gratitude. M. de Chateaubriand informs me that you retain your charitable feelings for the Infirmary. I commend it to you, madame. It is a child

for whom I have a great weakness; and I shall be happy to know that it is in your keeping. Poor sister Reine will also be less unhappy to hear, that she will only have to do with you and Mlle. d'Acosta. I doubt if she could support the presence of any one else.

Please accept again, madame, my sincere thanks, and believe me very sincerely yours,

VISCOUNTESS DE CHATEAUBRIAND.

LA SEYNE, near TOULON, March 7, 1826.

I am obliged to trouble you again, madame; but it is in the cause of justice, and it will be doing me a great favor. I sincerely trust that you will not refuse to exert your influence with the Duke de Doudeauville, in favor of a poor lady of this province, who, at an advanced age, and in consequence of the Revolution, has been reduced to the most frightful indigence. No one has a better right to claim royal bounty. She is very infirm, and enjoys here all the consideration due to her piety and the perfect resignation with which she bears her misfortunes. She had the honor to write, in the month of January, 1825, to M. de Doudeauville, who had the kindness to reply to her, and who did not deprive her of hope; but, in order to get the expected aid, your influence is needed, madame. I enclose the little note that the good lady has sent to me.

If the Duke de Doudeauville will have the kindness to look over the papers relating to her claims, which have been lying at the bureaus since 1819, he can assure himself of the justice of my poor protegé's cause. I hear daily of some new kindness of yours toward the Infirmary. It seems, madame, that the good God does not intend that this work shall be a failure, since it has been put into your charitable hands. Our poor sister Reine is very happy in having met with you. She, who was so afraid of new faces and lady managers, is already accustomed to you. I hope, however, that they will very soon think of relieving you from the cares, which must be very fatiguing for you; and that the archbishop will not delay in placing the administration of the establishment under another name than mine.

I should be very sorry, if your kindness prevents you from fulfilling the hope you gave us of passing a little time with us at Lausanne.

Thanking you again, madame, for your kindness, believe me, very affectionately yours,

VISCOUNTESS DE CHATEAUBRIAND.

P.S. — I am not writing to-day to M. de Chateaubriand: if you see him, be kind enough to let him know you have heard from me.

LAUSANNE, May 20, 1826.

On recovering from a violent illness, I hasten, madame, to thank you a thousand times for your kindnesses. You have made a whole family — the most worthy people in the world — happy, by obtaining a pension for my poor protegé, Mme. Jonquère. She is a saint, and will pray to God for you. Will you, madame, kindly make my acknowledgments to the Duke de Doudeauville, and express to him my thanks?

You have also been kind enough to select a bonnet for me. M. de Chateaubriand must have counted greatly upon your good-nature, to have given you that trouble. To fill up the measure of your good works, Mlle. d'Acosta tells me that you have brought wealth to the Infirmary. It is God who will recompense you for this last good deed; but I am not the less grateful for a charity which I regard as a benefit conferred upon myself.

Believe me, madame, very affectionately yours,

VISCOUNTESS DE CHATEAUBRIAND.

P.S. — Have you, then, entirely given up your journey to Lausanne? It is depriving us, as well as your many friends in this province, of a great pleasure.

Mme. de Chateaubriand returned to Paris in the course of the summer, and the next winter gave a fête at the Infirmary, for the benefit of that institution.

MME. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Thursday, March 15, 1827.

As M. de. Chateaubriand would rather steal than beg, I fear, madame, that he has acquitted himself badly of my commission. A good work is in question. To good works you are ever kindly disposed; besides, it is to do me a service, and I am used to your kindnesses. Now, the point is this: we would like to have, in default of a fine preacher, a little good music for our fête of the 27th. We hear marvellous things about Choron's choir; and it appears that a word from you is all powerful with him. Will you, then, be so kind as to ask him to let us have his boys for that day? Only a small number of them, however; for I remember, on one occasion, that a veritable army of them came to the Infirmary. If he consents, as I do not doubt he

will, I must have an interview with him; and he must come to me, as I cannot go out. It is necessary that we come to some arrangement with regard to the selections, which he has already sung a thousand times; and besides, I have the music, which I could give him.

A thousand pardons for troubling you so often; but this is the way with ladies given up to good works. I know of no people more troublesome, more tiresome, more headstrong, and more useless. Believe me, madame, with many thanks.

Very sincerely yours,

VISCOUNTESS DE CHATEAUBRIAND.

In January of the following year, 1828, occurred the downfall of M. de Villèle. M. de Chateaubriand had contributed too largely to this result to be ignored by the triumphant party. It was not possible to give him a seat in the Cabinet, owing to the personal dislike felt for him by Charles X. The embassy to Rome was therefore offerred to him, as the post most likely to tempt him. But this arrangement involved the removal of the Duke de Laval from a place which was agreeable to him, and which he had most successfully filled. Thus, again, Mme. Récamier found herself placed between the opposing interests and rival pretensions of two of her friends.

People were not wanting, eager to excite unpleasant feelings between the two men; but, as usual, Mme. Récamier succeeded in her mission of pacification. The Duke de Laval, informed of the new arrangements that threatened to send him from Rome to Vienna, acquiesced in their political necessity, though he deeply regretted leaving a place so agreeable to him every way. He wrote to Mme. Récamier, Jan. 27, 1828:—

"One word, one single word, dear, ever dear friend, in reply to your little note of the 3d, delayed on the way; but so entirely kind and friendly, so full of interesting citations, that I cannot postpone my reply. Certainly, the language that you say your friend uses, and the proper expressions that you quote, are very different from those the public attributes to him, and from the sentiments and designs he has been supposed to hold with so much assurance and obstinacy.

"But, in spite of appearances, you must be right, as you know what his secret thoughts are, better than anybody."

In the midst of these difficulties, Mme. Récamier lost her father. The Duke de Laval, who had been for so many years a witness of her filial devotion, thus wrote to her:—

DUKE DE LAVAL TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Rome, April 5, 1828.

M. de Givré has just informed me of the sad event which must fill your filial heart with sorrow. I break the silence which you have maintained, — and which is owing, I trust, more to your habits than to any decline in your friendship, — to offer you my sincere sympathy.

Be assured, that no misfortune can happen to you that I do not feel as personal to myself. If you fail to reply to these friendly words, as you did last year to my letter from Albano, it will make no difference with me. It is still you, the friend of twenty-five years, the charming woman whose power I have experienced, and whose intimacy I have enjoyed, during the best part of my life.

My poor aunt[1] sometimes sends me tidings of you. She loves you on her son's account. Hortense[2] also, with whom you have so little in common, adores you. It is your talisman, this power of involuntary and powerful fascination. . . .

M. de Chateaubriand, upon receiving notice of his appointment as Ambassador, wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs the following letter:—

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO COUNT DE LA FERRONNAYS.

Monday, May 26, 1828.

Noble Count, — In reading your letter over again, I perceive that the Duke de Laval felt profound regret at leaving Rome. From another source, I have learned that he has expressed this same reluctance to his family and friends.

Not for the world would I stand in the way of any man, and, above all, a man who, like the Duke de Laval, has always behaved handsomely toward me. The king has no better, nobler, or more faithful servant than his present Ambassador at the Holy See.

Under these circumstances, permit me to address you more as a friend than a Minister. Unless the Duke de Laval himself thinks it his duty to overcome my scruples, I cannot accept the honorable mission that His Majesty has been pleased to offer

[1] Viscountess de Laval, mother of Matthieu de Montmorency.
[2] Duchess Matthieu de Montmorency.

me. I will never take his place but with his consent. He must settle the question.

Pardon, noble Count, these importunities and petty personal interests, so annoying in the press of great public matters. You know that I ask nothing but to be passive in all these arrangements. I have no other desire than to maintain a good understanding between us all, and to support the Government with all the little influence that the public have been kind enough to attach to my name. But it is not you, my noble friend, who will take it ill that I should hesitate through a feeling of delicacy. I love dearly the new liberties of France, but I cannot separate them from the old French honor.

See, I beg of you, the Duke de Laval before the Council meets, in order that you may carry to the king an assurance of the harmony, submission, and respectful gratitude of all the interested parties.

Matters being at last honorably adjusted between M. de Chateaubriand and the Duke de Laval, the latter left for Vienna, and the former for Rome.

During this absence, all of Mme. Récamier's interests were concentrated upon the correspondence of her illustrious friend. I shall, therefore, give the letters almost without interruption, limiting myself to necessary explanations: —

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

PARIS, Sunday morning, Sept. 14.

This may be considered my first letter: it calls you to Rome, or brings me back to Paris. Nothing in life, believe me, can ever again alienate or separate me from you. I do not wish to tell you what I suffer, because you are suffering. Remember that it will be a month before I arrive in Rome; so four weeks of our separation will be over already. You can, if you choose, alter the time of your journey, and start sooner. All the blame, if you do not come, will be on your side; because I will love you so much, my letters will so assure you of it, I will call you to my side with so much constancy, that you will have no pretext to forsake me.

Remember that we must end our days together. It is but a sad gift that I present to you, — the remnant of my life: but take it; and, if I have lost some time, what is left is of greater worth, since it will be devoted wholly to you.

I will write you this evening a few lines from Fontainebleau, and afterward from Villeneuve and Dijon; also, in passing the frontier, and from Lausanne and Simplon. Write so that I

shall hear from you as I pass through Milan. We will soon meet. I am going to prepare a residence for you, and to take possession, in your name, of the ruins of Rome. Protect me, my good angel.

Ballanche gave me great pleasure: he had seen you, and brought along with him some of your atmosphere. Good-bye until evening. On second thoughts, you had better write me a line to Lausanne, — a place that will bring back memories of you; and then to Milan. You must prepay your letters.

Hyacinth will see you. He will bring me tidings of you to-morrow to Villeneuve.

FONTAINEBLEAU, Sunday evening, Sept. 14.

I have driven through a portion of this beautiful and melancholy forest. The weather has been also gloomy. I am now writing to you in a small room of the tavern, alone, and occupied with you. If you had any desire to be avenged, you might rejoice now. I am going to Italy, with a heart quite as sick and suffering as yours was some years ago. I have only one desire, I can only form one prayer, and that is for you to come quickly, so that I can support an exile beyond the mountains. Long journeys are no longer a pleasure to me. I am now only an old traveller, wearied and forlorn, on the road to my long home. If you do not come, I shall have lost my only hope. Come, then, and learn at last that your power is unbroken and boundless.

There is much of interest in Fontainebleau; but I can only think of what I have lost. To-morrow, another little note from Villeneuve. Here my thoughts of you are disturbed by no other memories: at Villeneuve, I shall think of poor Joubert. I try to say to myself, that, in going away, I am only drawing nearer to you. I should like to believe it, and still you are not there!

VILLENEUVE-SUR-YONNE, Tuesday morning, Sept. 16.

I do not know whether I shall be able to write to you on the paper which they have given me at the tavern. I am very low-spirited. I saw, on arriving, the chateau that Mme. de Beaumont inhabited during the Revolution. Poor friend Joubert often pointed out to me a sandy road, leading up a hill through a woods, by which he went to see his fugitive neighbor. At that time Mme. de Beaumont was no longer living: we mourned her together. Joubert in his turn has disappeared; the chateau has changed hands; the whole de Serilly family are scattered. If you were gone too, what would become of me?

I do not wish to sadden you to-day: I prefer to bring my letter to an end. What are my memories of the past—to which you are a stranger—to you? Have you not yours also? Let us arrange our future: mine belongs entirely to you. But am I not henceforward going to overwhelm you with letters? In trying to repair my old wrongs, I fear I shall go to the other extreme. When shall I have a line from you? I should like very much to know how you bear my absence. Shall I have a word from you when I stop at Lausanne, and another at Milan? Tell me if you are satisfied with me. I will write day after to-morrow from Dijon.

My health is better, and the journey is also benefiting Mme. de Chateaubriand. Do not fail to start as soon as you can. Have you abandoned the little chamber? A speedy meeting!

Friday, Sept. 19.

At the moment of passing the frontier, I am writing in a wretched cabin, to say, that in France and out of France, the other side as well as this side of the Alps. I am living for you, and expecting you.

LAUSANNE, Monday, Sept. 22, 1828.

On my arrival here day before yesterday, I was very much dispirited at not finding a line from you; but it came yesterday, and gave me inexpressible pleasure. You recognize, at last, how much you are to me. You see that time and distance alter nothing. My successive letters from Dijon,[1] Pontarlier, and Lausanne, will have proved to you that my regrets only increase with absence. This will be the case until the day when I return to Paris, or until the moment you arrive in Rome.

And now for particulars: Mme. de Chateaubriand bore the journey quite well, but she has been very ill since her arrival here. Her illness will oblige us to remain here a day longer. We shall leave the day after to-morrow (Wednesday, the 24th). In three days we shall be at the foot of the Simplon; crossing it on Saturday, 27th. Next Sunday, therefore, we shall enter Italy. There a new life begins for me. If you come to Rome, and are willing to remain, we will end our days there; if not, I shall return to France to die near you.

In my opinion, the great political event of the day is the campaign in which the Russians are engaged.[2] If they are not successful, France will find herself singularly involved, and the

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[1] The letter dated from Dijon has not been found.

[2] The war between Russia and Turkey.

individual destinies of the men in power will be dependent upon the force of events and the chances of fortune. If we desire to brave the storm, we must close the ranks, and call upon all who can be useful. Will it be done? I doubt it; and it is this that makes the future so uncertain for us all.

You cannot conceive how soon in travelling one becomes a stranger to passing events. For the last eight days, I have known nothing of what is going on,—have not heard any thing about anybody. Here I have met several worthy people, who only talk to us about ourselves and the pleasure of seeing us. All England is going to Rome this year. It makes me shudder. You know that I have not the same tastes as the Duke de Laval.

Tuesday, Sept. 23.

The "Journal des Débats" announces this morning the ratification of the treaty of the 6th July. If it be true, it is great news. Greece will be free, affairs will straighten themselves, and a treaty of peace will follow. I only speak to you of these events on account of their influence upon my fate. Our future, in that case, would be more easy to foresee and accomplish.

I am going to close this long letter. We start to-morrow. I will write you from Brigg, at the foot of the Simplon. Has your niece returned?[1] Well, the days go on, even those of absence, and you will very soon be thinking of preparing for your journey. That worthy fellow, Henri, will bring you this letter. Yours, while I live. I am going after your letter at Milan.

Brigg, foot of The Simplon, Sept. 25, 1828.

I have just passed two very sad days. Since I left Lausanne, I have been continually coming upon traces of two poor women. One of them, Mme. de Custine, has just expired at Bex; the other, Mme. de Duras, has gone to Nice to die. How transitory every thing in life is! Sion, which I have passed, was the kingdom intended for me by Bonaparte, and which the death of the Duke d'Enghien was the cause of my abdicating. I have met some monks of St. Bernard. Only two are left who witnessed the famous passage of the French army.

Do you know why all this weighs upon me? It is that I am going to cross the Alps, and they will be between you and me. It seems to me as though I were again parting from you.

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[1] Mme. Lenormant accompanied her husband to Toulon, whence he was to embark for Egypt on the Scientific Expedition, headed by Champollion.

Come quickly, and put an end to this fatality. Pass over these mountains that weigh upon me. I feel now that I want my friends about me. I am not the traveller I was; I only dream of what I have left behind me, and change of scene annoys me. Come, then, quickly.

MILAN, Sept. 29, 1828.

Here I am at Milan, for the sixth time in my life. I arrived here last evening. I wrote to you on the 25th, from Brigg: I am neither happier nor gayer this side of the Alps than I was on the other. I have seen, however, an enchanting sky at Arona, on the borders of Lake Maggiore, where I slept on Saturday; but I am very much afraid, judging from the first impressions, that beautiful Italy has lost all her charms for me. I have only need of that which has now become an absorbing interest in a life already more than half gone. You know what that is.

To-morrow we continue our journey. Mme. de Chateaubriand is very well. I have had a slight return of my Paris illness. At Bologna I enter the territory of the Holy See. I cannot tell you what day I shall be in Rome. I will write from Ancona. I implore you not to delay your coming: you cannot imagine how lonely and unhappy I am. I have sent to the post-office to see if there is any thing there from you, — I will tell with what success before closing my letter. I absolutely ignore all that is passing in the world. When I arrive at an inn, I go to bed, and only rise to start on my journey. I do not wish to see any thing. I have only one thought, — the thought of soon seeing you again. You see that I am looking forward to your journey.

No letter. You have, perhaps, forgotten to prepay it. If you have written, the French Consul will forward your letters to Rome.

ROME, Oct. 11, 1828.

You ought to be satisfied. I have written to you from every place in Italy where I stopped. I have traversed this beautiful country, so associated with you. This association consoled me, without, however, taking away the sadness of other recollections, which I encounter at every step. I have looked upon the Adriatic, which I crossed more than twenty years ago, and in such a frame of mind! At Terni I stayed to console a poor dying woman. Rome finds me cold, and bereft of enthusiasm. As I feared, her monuments, after those of Athens, appear coarse to me. My memory for places, which is both astonish-

ing and painful, will not let me forget a single stone. I have traversed alone and on foot this great dilapidated city only in longing to leave it, and thinking how I should get back to the Abbaye and the Rue d'Enfer.

I have seen no one, except the Secretary of State. I am going to have my audience with the Pope. In order to find somebody to speak to, last evening, at sunset, I sought out Guérin.[1] I found him alone. He was delighted to see me. We admired together the horizon, illuminated by the last rays of the sun. This is the only thing that seemed to me the same as formerly. Either my eyes, or the things themselves, have changed; perhaps both. Poor Guérin, who detests Rome, was so delighted to find I shared his feelings, that he almost cried. Now you have my history exactly.

Mme. de Chateaubriand is no better pleased. Alone in a great house, with not even a cat to say to her, God bless you! and finding every thing absurdly arranged in this bachelor's establishment (*boudoirs in English style* in a Roman palace), she bewails the day that she took it into her head to come here. Perhaps she will take more kindly to her new situation, when she begins to have visitors. I do not doubt that she will have a real success; but her health will always be an obstacle to a life of society. Now you have the whole story. I have, besides, been very honorably welcomed by all the authorities on the route,—at Bologna, Ancona, and Loretto. They perfectly understood that I was not exactly an ordinary man, but scarcely knew the reason why. Was he a friend? Was he an enemy? In Egypt, the politicians and the educated men took me for some great General of Bonaparte, disguised as a *savant*.

The conclusion of all is, that you must come immediately to my relief, or I shall rejoin you in a little while. I have not received a single word from you, except a line at Lausanne,—nothing at Milan; nothing at Rome. The post comes in this morning. Shall I get any thing?

Noon.

Yes: I have something; two lines in reply to my note when crossing the frontier. It has been long delayed, but it does me great good. I told you so: you are well avenged; my heart-heaviness in Italy is expiating yours. Write to me at length; and, above all, come.

I have received a letter from Taylor, who asks me for

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[1] Peter Guérin, the historical painter and pupil of Regnault, born in Paris in 1774. Ary Scheffer and Eugène Delacroix were his pupils.

"Moses." I will tell him to talk over the matter with you. If you both think it well to risk it, I will furnish the money.

Write to me quickly. Write, and come; but, above all, I hope that I may be able to return speedily to your side.

ROME, Oct. 14, 1828.

Still no letter from you by yesterday's courier. Is it possible that you have not written to me? Then you carry your retaliation too far. Can any accident have happened to your letters? I will not repeat to you what I have already said in all of mine. From them, you will see the state of my mind and heart. Come quickly, or find the means to recall me speedily. I have seen the Pope. He is the handsomest prince and the most venerable priest in the world. He talked with me a long time. He is full of nobility and gentleness, knowledge of the world and of affairs. I am enchanted with him. The Secretary of State is a man of ability. All along the route, I was overwhelmed with honors; and I have been remarkably well received here. You will have seen by the journals, that M. Lasagni has brought to a close the affair of the bishops. I have absolutely nothing to do here. The "Daily" and the "Gazette" are greatly in error about the Court of Rome. Here nothing is exaggerated, and all publicity is disliked.

As to society, I know nothing at all about it. I make visits through cards. I have only seen M. de Celles,[1] a very able diplomatist and accomplished man. I expect to meet Mme. de Valence at his house. Come, then, I beg of you. Come quickly, and write. Mme. de Chateaubriand is very ill. I foresee that she is about to achieve that success which you predicted for her. His Holiness has spoken of her to me. Come. I suppose that you are the only one in Paris who remembers me.

ROME, Oct. 18, 1828.

I am beginning this letter Saturday morning, which is postday. Shall I have a letter from you? I dare not hope it, after all the delays that must have happened; for certainly you have written. My feelings have not changed. Yesterday, I walked to the Villa Borghese for the first time. I was going to Tenerani's to see you in Cymodocea; but Givré, who was to take me there, could not come.

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[1] Ambassador from the Low Countries, son-in-law of the Countess de Valence (daughter of Mme. de Genlis).

The villa gave me more pleasure than all the rest of Rome put together. Those old trees, those dilapidated monuments, the recollections of my solitary walks in that place, overcame me; and, when I thought that in a few months' time I might be walking there with you, I was almost reconciled to my fate. But it is very certain, nevertheless, that I take no interest in any thing. I find every thing tiresome, away from you and my retreat in the Rue d'Enfer. I must go back there as soon as possible. Mme. de Chateaubriand is like me. Her only desire is to be again amongst her sick people and old friends.

However, I have no one to complain of. I could not have been better received. I notice a moderation in the tone of politics that our fanatics would do well to take as an example. As to society, properly so called, I know nothing of it yet. Everybody is absent; but they will return to Rome by All-Saints' Day. The English are beginning to arrive. I have a ceremonious reception to-morrow for all the French people. We are to dine Monday, at Mme. de Celles', with Mme. de Valence.

Noon.

At last, a letter from you, dated the 3d. Imagine the happiness it gives me. I have only time to add one word to this letter. Of the two Frenchmen said to be arrested, one of them was so in fact; but he was almost immediately set at liberty: the other has never been subjected to the slightest detention. It all happened before my arrival. You speak to me of Ireland. I cannot talk to you about it; but I can assure you that they approve of no violent measures here. I am expecting the travellers you announce: the marriage would be a singular thing. But you are the only traveller who interests me. Between this and the 1st of January, we shall know positively whether you or I must set out. You ask me for my impressions. By this time, you have received from me a host of letters, all telling you the same thing, — "I am very sad: come."

I have just read the "Globe" of the 4th. It is entirely in the wrong about the affair of the two young men. The one who was arrested did not belong at all to the Academy of France. The "Globe" ought to avoid denunciations unworthy of its impartiality. The particulars it gives are entirely false. I have written to you on the subject of "Moses," which M. Taylor wants. I have referred him to you; and you can do as you please. If it is necessary, I will pay, and notify Ladvocat.

Rome, Oct. 21, 1828.

Though I did not expect to get a letter from you yesterday, as you are not lavish of your letters, and as I had received one by the last courier, still I was greatly pained when I found nothing from you.

Always the same state of feeling on my part, — from the ennui of solitude, I have fallen into that of dinners and visits. It is positively certain that I can no longer endure a life of society: it was at all times odious to me; but my five years of retirement have entirely incapacitated me for its duties. I ask myself incessantly, of what good is this loss of time; this necessity of seeing people with whom one has nothing in common; this need of giving up the last years of my life to simpletons, and the chattering of ordinary people? — and all for what? For an end which I do not wish to attain, since I have no ambition, and only desire to retire.

You see, therefore, that, finding in art and science only subjects for sadness, and in the world only objects of weariness, it is needful that I should return as soon as possible to my rest. Near you, I shall recover all that is wanting to me here.

Rome, Oct. 23, 1828.

I am always busy at my little notes for each courier, and it is all my life. I have been to Tenerani's. I have seen the bas-relief: it is admirable; and you are a thousand times still more admirable.

Tenerani was much moved by what I said to him. He is to dine with me next Monday. He told me that his little *chef d'œuvre* was at my disposal. I ardently desire to have it at my house; but I do not know what to do, as I am ignorant how matters stand between you. I hope that you are not ruining yourself, and that you will let me share half the expense.

I am going to try and take up my historical works, to kill the time that is killing me. Have you heard M. de Thierry spoken of? The Intendant-General has not replied to my letter. I intend writing him another, but probably with no better success. Mme. de Chateaubriand has been ill: she is not yet up. On All-Saints' Day, if she is well, she will have her audience with the Pope.

No strangers here yet, excepting Mme. Merlin, whom I have not seen. She is ill, and returns to France in a few days. I get these particulars from the attachés.

I have written all this before the time for the post to arrive.

Alas! I hope for nothing from you. Try, then, to get me recalled. Have you heard any thing from the traveller in Egypt?[1] Do you think that it will not do to arrange the business with Taylor during my absence? You know my idea about the parts for the choruses. I particularly want them to be *declaimed*, with a few pieces sung by the whole troop. They could cut out what was necessary, but must be careful to bring the entire thing before the public by publishing it without omissions, the very day after the representation.

Noon

I was not mistaken: nothing from you. Call to mind the time when you made similar reflections on post-days. Saturday, — the day after to-morrow, — you will have another letter from me.

We are in the greatest ignorance with regard to all political news, either at home or elsewhere.

I have received despatches from Ancona, and I am obliged to send off a secretary as courier. He leaves immediately. You will receive this eight or nine days after date; and, through M. Henri, you can institute a search for all the letters that may be encumbering the office of Foreign Affairs. Since I have been at Rome, I have written to you by every courier; that is to say, three times a week. They all contain the same thing, — that I am dying here without you; that you must either come to me, or I return to you: but I prefer to be recalled. I am homesick.

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[1] M. Lenormant.

CHAPTER XVI.

1828–1829.

Letters from the Duke de Laval. — Letters from M. de Chateaubriand relating to the Monument of Tasso; Mme. de Chateaubriand's presentation to the Pope; The representation of "Moses" at the Théâtre Français; Mme. Salvage: Tomb of Poussin; A fête by the nuns of St. Dénis; M. de La Ferronnays's *congé*.

ON his arrival at Vienna, the Duke de Laval wrote in his turn to Mme. Récamier: —

VIENNA, Oct. 11, 1828.

I desire to recall myself to you in these few lines, expressive of my old and unchangeable affection.

I have been here two days. I am oppressed with melancholy, and do not see how I am going to bear it in a situation so new to me. France and Italy are ever before me. In the midst of so many novelties, I feel myself isolated, as if in a desert. House, people, foreign language, — all is strange to me, and all these novelties bewilder me. To receive a line from you, to see the handwriting of a friend, and to know that our last interview did not leave a painful impression upon you, would be very sweet to me. So be kind, generous, benevolent, to the oldest of your friends.

Let me know whether your solitude and your regrets have not made you change your mind; whether you have seen my aunt,[1] my amiable aunt, whose sorrows do not make her less charming; and also whether you are still at the Abbaye.

I claim your indulgence for this insignificant note, of which the only value consists in its wish to prove to you, that, in all my vexations and embarrassments, I am thinking of the oldest of my friends. I desire to be remembered to your faithful Ballanche, with whom I have always sympathized.

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[1] Viscountess de Laval.

VIENNA, Nov. 12, 1828.

I take advantage of my first courier to Paris to forward you a token of my regard.

I am sending a similar trifle to my aunt, whom you love, and who loves you for your mind and heart, and especially for your regrets for the angelic being no longer with us. Such a state of feeling would have pleased that excellent friend, my second self, to whom I should so love to write, and confide all my interests, which he used to watch over and defend so well. At last, I am sending you my pretty speeches from the Danube to the Seine. I would much prefer the Tiber; and I am thinking constantly of what I call my abdication.

I wrote you, a few days ago, a miserable little note. I was intensely melancholy. I was just beginning my new life. Your friend René has certainly ousted me from the better situation. May he enjoy it, and give it back to me again, when ambition, disgust, his fortune (or his fickleness rather), will call him elsewhere!

Here I am full of ardor and application, I do assure you. I wish to do well, to give entire satisfaction, in order to justify my pretension to choose between two other missions when they become vacant. You know what my wishes are: we have discussed them sufficiently.

I do not know why you persist in your repugnance to writing; for truly your style is charming, and in exquisite taste. Nothing can be more graceful than your manner of quoting the melancholy impressions of your poor, absent friend. His words are full of love for you. Is it not an artifice to allure you to his side? My opinion is that you will not resist, if he continues to hold such language; and then, if you go and ask the advice of my aunt[1] Rue Royale, she will not dissuade you from this weakness. She says, — not without reason, and certainly not without enticement, — that, in certain circumstances in life, it is better to satisfy one's own heart than please the world. Adieu. Yours, with all my heart.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

ROME, Oct. 25, 1828.

I am very sorry that the special courier, I sent off to Paris day before yesterday, took me by surprise; as the letter he carries for you might have been written more in detail, and I had several things to say to you about my position and affairs in France.

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[1] Viscountess de Laval.

I have almost finished my visits to the artists. They appear pleased with them. You know that a monument is to be raised, by subscription, to your great favorite, Tasso. I shall subscribe, and I should like very much if the King of France would do so likewise. The Emperor of Austria has just given two hundred sequins, and a great talk is made about it. I have already set on foot *your idea* for the Tomb of Poussin: we will see by and by what can be done for that of Claude Lorraine. You perceive, that I am trying to beguile my weariness, in occupying myself with the things that used to afford you some diversion. Your image follows me, and ever shall follow me, everywhere.

M. de Forbin arrived yesterday. He came to the Embassy. I did not see him: they say he is very much changed. I am going to return his visit to-day. Among the studios I visited, was that of the artist who was imprisoned. He is, however, very uninteresting. I bought from him two little pictures: he is in great want of money.

Here is the courier, and a very long, very kind letter from you of the 12th. Imagine my joy; and, what makes it greater is the fact that I have done all you recommend me to do:—

1st, I have written down my impressions.

2d, I have written by every post.

3d, I have told you to have an understanding with Taylor.

Well, have I not divined you perfectly? Good-bye, but only until next Monday.

Rome, Tuesday, Oct. 28, 1828.

By this time, M. de La Ferronnays must have arrived, and the question of his resuming his portfolio is to be decided; and, on the other hand, you ought to have received nearly all my letters. You are acquainted with all my feelings,—what impression Italy makes upon me, what I am thinking of, and what I desire. You will also have seen Taylor: so my destiny, for the moment, is accomplished, and it is now from this point we must start in arranging the future. I am doing what I can, and much beyond what my indolence and tastes incline me to do, to please somewhat the people who surround me. But this duty of satisfying everybody would be much better in your hands than mine; and these everlasting visits and compliments without end increase the homesickness with which I am tormented.

I have seen M. de Forbin. I find him much changed, and it troubles me. Mme. de Valence talks only of her poor child, and I like her for being as sad as myself. The Prince-Royal of

Prussia is here, who will come perhaps on the St. Charles (4th of November), to pass the evening with me. On that day we half-open our door, to close it afterward. I am impatiently expecting Mme. Salvage, who is at Milan, and to whom I can talk of you. Mme. de Valence asked me if you were coming; and I said boldly, "Yes, &c., if I did not myself return to France." Will you scold me? - I shall be a little more tranquil when I hear from you that all my letters have reached you, and that you are satisfied with me.

ROME, Oct. 30, 1828.

I received this morning a letter from Paris, dated the 21st of this month. I could have had letters from you of this date, and there is nothing from you! Let me be patient. I am told, that M. de La Ferronnays was to return the 24th or 25th, and that he will resume his place in the Cabinet. So we are at rest with regard to that matter, while the pains of absence, and all the feelings of which I talk to you three times a week, remain the same. I should be a little happier, or a little less sad, if you would write to me oftener and more at length, or if you would announce to me my recall or your arrival.

I see in all the journals notices of the Egyptian expedition: you are therefore easy about M. Lenormant; but, if you do not come to meet him half-way before the month of March, what a long interval of expectation and weariness for me!

Are you going to occupy yourself with "Moses" in the interim? The opportunity is, perhaps, a good one; and I have made you mistress of its fate.

Still, if the question lies between your coming or putting that in the fire, burn it immediately.

Mme. de Chateaubriand is in her bed. I gave a dinner yesterday to M. Forbin. We talked only of our regrets at being away from France and you.

ROME, Nov. 1, 1828.

The courier who brought me last Thursday a letter from Paris, nine days after date, apprised me of the return of M. de La Ferronnays, and his resumption of his portfolio. Since then, we have received by express the news of the taking of Varna. Consequently, those contingencies which might bring on a political crisis in France, and render individual destinies uncertain, seem removed for the moment; and our future is in our own hands. As to mine, it depends upon you; and either you come to pass some time with us, and we will return all together, or I come back to you in the spring.

This very morning, and in two hours' time, Mme. de Chateaubriand is to be presented to the Pope, in the Sistine Chapel. I do not know how she will bear the ceremony: she is extremely ill. On the 4th, we have the St. Charles. The Pope will come to St. Louis in the morning, and in the evening the Prince-Royal of Prussia will come to my house. We shall only have a small party, not being ready yet to give grand entertainments. I leave you to dress. I present Mme. de Chateaubriand on returning from the Vatican.

Mme. Salvage may be here for the St. Charles. What happiness to talk of you!

One o'clock.

Mme. de Chateaubriand has borne the ceremony without great fatigue. The Pope was very gracious. The courier from Florence has failed to appear; and, consequently, no letter from you.

The courier from Ancona brings the "Constitutionnel" of the 21st, which has a long article on the probability of M. de La Ferronnays's nomination to the Presidency of the Council. I do not believe it, but I should like it: that would be the natural issue of my work.

Rome, Nov. 5, 1828.

We had yesterday, so the secretaries say, a very delightful day. Not a member of the diplomatic corps was wanting at the St. Charles, and, what has never been seen before, the Pope came, and I had Davidde come for the singing; so that the church was full.

In the evening, we had a little reception, — looked upon as a sort of French affair, — because I have still absolutely nothing in readiness. But all the great ladies — Roman, Russian, and English — came, and the cardinals and the Prince-Royal of Prussia. I tried not to forget any artist, whether French or foreign. I had also the commercial part of the community invited, which my predecessors have never done: they also appeared much pleased. There was music: I had Davidde and Mme. Boccabadati; that is to say, the best that could be procured; for I remembered what you said about poor concerts. Mme. Merlin sang: she left this morning for France. So I think my beginning has been successful. I hope this beginning will be the end: you were not there.

What am I doing here? I can, no doubt, go through with this life of representation, like any one else; but is it my true life? Have I nothing better to do in this world? If I have some ability, is it not a pity that it is not turned to more profit

for my country? or rather why does not time pension me off? I am only one of his old pensioners, who will very soon be off his list.

To finish the account of my first fête: I tried to be polite; but I was profoundly sad at heart, and I fear it was observed.

Mme. Merlin is a beautiful woman. She brought with her a daughter of sixteen or seventeen, very timid and very pretty. I have only seen these ladies twice, — once at the Austrian Embassy, where Mme. Merlin refused to sing; and yesterday at my house, where she was kind enough to sing for the king.

The wife of the Austrian Ambassador is agreeable, and also sings. She resembles poor Mme. de Mouchy; so I cannot look at her without real pain.

Tenerani was here. I took him into a corner to talk about you. The Princess Doria was ill, and Mme. Dodwell[1] absent. These particulars are more tiresome for me to give than they are for you to read. But, if I had suppressed them, you would have heard sooner or later, that there had been a St. Charles; and you would have imagined some mystery. I will have henceforward no secrets from you.

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* [2] Rome, Nov. 15, 1828.

Every time that a special courier arrives, I worry myself. A courier has brought me to-night a despatch from M. de La Ferronnays, announcing the resumption of his portfolio. This despatch is of the 30th of last month. So, if you had written to me, I should know to-day what you thought eight days ago. M. de La Ferronnays informs me of the surrender of Varna, which I already knew. I think I have said to you, that the whole question turned upon the fall of this place; and that the Sultan would not think of peace, until the Russians had done what they never have accomplished in their former wars.

Our journals have been miserably Turkish lately. How can

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[1] Mme. Dodwell's maiden name was Gérard. She belonged to a noble Roman family. Her first husband was the English antiquary Dodwell, author of a work called "Classical Tour in Greece." She is now the wife of Count Spaur, of Bavaria. When Pius IX. was prisoner, in the hands of his rebel subjects, 1848, she aided his escape.

[2] The 8th volume of M. de Chateaubriand's memoirs contains some of his letters to Mme. Récamier from Rome, altered in order that they might look well in his narrative. I have thought it right to reproduce them here in their integrity, from the originals in my possession. It is interesting to compare the two. In many cases, the first, hasty utterance, written without a thought of the public, is not inferior to the more finished expression intended for publication. I shall mark with an asterisk each of the letters thus modified.

they forget the noble cause of Greece, and fall down in admiration before barbarians, who are spreading slavery and pestilence over the country of great men, and the most beautiful portion of Europe? That is the way with us French: a little personal dissatisfaction will make us forget our principles and the most generous feelings. The defeat of the Turks might possibly move me to a little pity: the triumph of the Turks would fill me with horror.

So my friend remains in power. I flatter myself, that my determination to follow him has kept away competitors from his portfolio. But, in the end, it will be necessary for me to leave here. My sole aspiration is to abandon a political career, and retire for ever into my solitude. I am athirst for independence in my last days. New generations are rising up: they will find those public liberties established for which I have fought so hard. May they neither impair nor abuse the heritage I leave them; and may I go and die in peace near you! I went day before yesterday to the Villa Panfili: what admirable solitude!

One o'clock.

At last, a letter from you by the usual courier, dated 25th of October. From it, I find that you have received my few lines from Ancona, and my first letter from Rome. Since then, you have been overwhelmed with my three letters per week, and I hope that you are in a state of lively repentance.

I am for letting Taylor proceed. The opportunity is excellent, and will not return again. If we fail, I have nothing to do with it; like Lord Byron, absent, I wash my hands of it: if we succeed, one success the more spoils nothing. Wait for a lull in politics? When shall we have it? Events follow each other, and drag us along with them. Settle the matter, then. Find Taylor, if he has not made his appearance. The money will be ready at M. Hérard's, my banker's.

We know about the poor Sister.[1] Mme. de Chateaubriand is very anxious and unhappy. Besides her attachment to the Sister, she fears that the Infirmary will be disorganized and ruined by her death.

Send your letters now to the Bureau of Foreign Affairs. M. Denoys takes charge of every thing. I have increased the correspondence, and I am to have a special courier every week. Instead of waiting for your letters twelve or thirteen days, they will reach me in eight.

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[1] Sister Reine, who had charge of the Infirmary of Maria Theresa, which, in connection with Mme. de Chateaubriand, she had established.

You ask me to remember you to such and such a person: I spoke of you to everybody only yesterday evening, at Visconti's. I announce your coming at Easter, and it gives general delight. Will you come, or shall I go? I prefer to go.

I have given orders to M. Hérard, banker, Rue St. Honoré, 372, to pay the sum of five thousand francs to M. Taylor, if he comes to demand it, in either my name or yours. I have given your name and address.

ROME, Nov. 11, 1828.

Mme. Salvage arrived yesterday; and I also received yesterday a kind little letter from you, making mention of two from me. The person with whom you have been dining used to write strange letters about us to the Greek Committee. I think he is a brave soldier, but without brains. We are expecting to hear of the death of the poor Sister. It grieves Mme. de Chateaubriand, and me also. A double evil will result from this death; if they cannot replace her well at the Infirmary, Mme. de Chateaubriand would dread to return there, and it is there, nevertheless, that I wish to go at the end of a few months, and finish my days.

I have told you all about Rome: there is no change. I have nothing to complain of: I am as well received as any one can be; but I do not fancy the life: I am dying from ennui. I only want you and my little retreat, and I hope for these blessings in the spring.

"Moses" is a thing decided. I have written to you about it: set the thing on foot. Fifteen thousand francs are at Hérard's. Let it be played as soon as possible. My absence, together with "Moses" being owned by my publisher, makes all proper, and prevents me from being injured by its failure. I have explained to you my wishes with regard to the choruses, — not much singing; a great deal of declamation; harps, tambourines, and trumpets to support the voices. Of the two bands of music in the third act, the one from the camp of the rebels is to be distant and lively; the other, from that of the Levites, near and solemn, — alternating and responding one to the other.

Do just as you choose with Taylor; above all, let all be done promptly. My health is not too good; I am about the same as usual with regard to my old complaints. How happy I shall be when I return for ever into my solitude, and build at the bottom of the garden that house, in which there will be two or three rooms for you; when, at last, I shall see you every day! I am perfectly decided: I wish to give up public life entirely, and retire at last to die. Tell me that you are pleased with me.

Rome, Nov. 15, 1828.

The post is in, and only leaves me a moment for writing, while it brings me nothing from you. I console myself a little with your letter that came by the last courier; but I have just heard of the death of the poor Sister. You can imagine Mme. de Chateaubriand's grief. So you wished to have her portrait taken. A thousand thanks for your touching attention: you are the best of friends. You see also how I love you.

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* Rome, Nov. 15, 1828.

As soon as Mme. Salvage arrived, I hastened to call upon her with Mme. de Chateaubriand, to hear about you, and see a person who had seen you. Whether she is ill, or for some unknown reason cannot go out, she has not yet returned our visit.

The Torlonias have given their first ball. I met all the English on the face of the globe there. I imagined myself again Ambassador at London. English women have the air of ballet-girls, engaged to dance for the winter at Paris, Milan, Rome, and Naples; and who return to London in the spring, after their engagement expires. The skippings of people over the ruins of the Capitol, and the uniform manners of grand society everywhere, are very strange things. If I only still had the resource of taking refuge in the deserts of Rome! But these deserts appeal to me no longer, and I only pass from ennui to ennui.

Shall I have a letter from you to-day? I almost expect one. You see how faithful I am in writing to you. When shall I be in my Infirmary again? and when shall I see you every day? You see that all my predictions about the war in the East are coming true. I announced, that, if Varna fell, we should have peace; and I hope we shall. They say Silistria is taken. It was I who sent you the courier, bearer of good news from the Morea. Poor Greece will be free at last. The Ministers ought to be satisfied. This will change their position; and I hope, that, in retiring now, I shall not have the appearance of abandoning them in peril. Have "Moses" played. That will be my last ambition, and my last sight of this world, that is ebbing away from me.

Noon.

The courier from France has not arrived. This is very tiresome. Nothing can be worse than the arrangements of these Italian post-stations.

On Monday, then!

ROME, Nov. 18, 1828.

Imagine my impatience. I wrote to you on Saturday, that the courier had not arrived. Yesterday (Monday) he should at least have brought on the delayed letters; and now here it is Tuesday, — the day the post closes, — and nothing has come yet. They say we shall have our letters by noon: it is now eleven o'clock, and our answers must go off at two. I am writing while waiting.

As soon as the courier is despatched, we start for Tivoli. Mme. de Chateaubriand wants to see the cascade before the bad season begins. The weather is still superb. Mme. de Chateaubriand and I are going together in an open carriage. The secretaries and attachés accompany us, — some on horseback, others in carriages. We shall sleep at Tivoli, and return to-morrow in time for dinner. You know what a sad visit I made to that cascade twenty-five years ago. This will not be any gayer.

I have begun my solitary walks about Rome. Yesterday I walked two hours in the Campagna, in the direction of France, whither tend all my thoughts. I dictated some words to Hyacinth, who wrote them down as we walked along; but I am little in the mood for writing. I have continual pain in my head, and my heart is too much absorbed in regrets. I shall only be myself again when I return to you.

Mme. Salvage came yesterday evening to see us. She is very odd.

ROME, Nov. 20, 1828.

I waste half of my letters talking to you about posts and couriers. I have at last received a letter from you, of the 3d of this month, by a retarded courier. Imagine what happiness! but, at the same time, what chagrin! A special courier arrives at the same time from the Bureau of Foreign Affairs, bringing despatches of the 10th; and nothing from you! Remember that a courier now leaves every week from the Rue des Capucines, and that this courier makes the journey in seven days. The modest Henri Hildebrand will come to give you notice, and take your orders. When you have only time to send by him these two lines, "I am well, and I love you," that will satisfy me; it being understood that you are not to neglect the ordinary post. — But to return to your letter.

It is very kind. I laughed at your recommendations. Fear nothing: I am clothed in armor. I will return to you, and promptly. We will end our days together in that little retreat,

under the great trees of the lonely boulevard, where I am incessantly wishing myself, near you. You confess that you have lately been in the wrong. I will make amends on my side.

Your dinner at Mme. de Boigne's has not surprised me. Fabvier's letters to the Greek Committee made me imagine what it was.

As for "Moses," I am, like you, longing to try its luck. I have told you every thing respecting it. The banker has been notified. He is, as I have told you, Hérard, Rue St. Honoré, No. 372. M. Taylor can present himself there in my name, and will receive fifteen thousand francs upon giving his receipt. You are to manage the rest. As the Carnival is long this year, it is possible to rehearse the whole thing, put it upon the stage, and play it in the height of the season.

I am going, according to your orders, to take the bas-relief from Tenerani's. I am delighted to have it at my house: it is something of you. You must admit Ladvocat into your confidence. He is the owner of "Moses;" but, like you, he thinks that the only time to hazard the undertaking is during my absence.

I have already announced to M. de La Ferronnays, that I shall ask a *congé* for Easter; but the use of this *congé* will always depend upon your plans and wishes. Give me your orders: I will obey them.

My health still continues poor. I am drinking asses' milk, which is not very agreeable. Write to me simply through the post. It is the surest and promptest way. At the same time, do not neglect the special couriers.

I had got thus far in my letter, when, in rummaging over the post-bag to see if any thing had been overlooked, I found a long letter from you, of the 10th. Imagine my joy and remorse! You give me all the particulars of "Moses" that I ask you for, and mention that visit of M. de Villemain, the account of which you are to give me in your letter of the 16th. You are the kindest of friends. Decide who shall be Arzane[1] yourself. Between beauty and talent, the choice is difficult; and I leave it entirely to you.

I have not a numerous correspondence. You know, or rather you used to know, that I write very little. I only reply to letters written to me. I have written once to MM. Bertin, Pasquier, Villemain, de Barante, de Laborde, Mme. d'Agnesseau, Mme. de Montcalm, and to Clara; because they *have written to me*. All my letters contain this, — that I am only at

[1] A character in "Moses."

Rome because M. de La Ferronnays is Minister; and that my sole wish is to give up affairs, and return for ever into my *Infirmary;* that, when we are old, there is no need of seeing ruins or travelling.

Now you have the text of my very numerous correspondence. I defy any one to cite a word more or less. You know me well enough to believe that what I tell you is true. I do not know whether Mme. Salvage is pleased with us; but I am not afraid of her *journal.*

ROME, Nov. 22, 1828.

The courier not yet arrived! And what enrages me is, that apparently you are suffering by the same delays, and giving way to a thousand unjust thoughts. I have told you, and I repeat it, I have written you three times a week; and my letters must reach you in lump. Last Thursday (the 20th), I wrote to you concerning "Moses" and Taylor, approving all you have done and will do. I am expecting now the news of the reading before the Committee.

I am still in the same state of mind in which you find me in all my letters. Every day I am more determined to put an end to my political career. It is time that I should disappear from the stage of this world. It is near you that I shall find, for the few days still remaining to me, the repose and happiness that thus far I have vainly asked of Heaven. I am doing almost nothing here. I have thrown upon paper a few ideas for my memoirs. I have made some historical abstracts. I have just finished quite a long memorial on the actual state of affairs in Europe, which La Ferronnays asked me for.

I continue greatly pleased with the Roman Government. It has just granted me the liberty of a Frenchman, who, for the matter of that, was guilty enough, and was condemned to five years' imprisonment. Cardinal Bernetti is wholly a statesman; and the moderation of the Sovereign Pontiff is admirable. But really I am only here by accident. My presence is of no use whatever to the service of the king. Any one else — the excellent Duke de Laval especially — would do, and a great deal better too, what I have to do at Rome. By my absence, I have given peace to the Ministry; by my return into my Infirmary, I shall not disturb this tranquillity. I ask nothing but retirement and oblivion. It is easy to come to an understanding with a man so accommodating.

Yours for life.

ROME, Nov. 25, 1828.

That wretched courier, behindhand since Saturday, 22d, is to arrive this morning; but will he come before the post closes at two o'clock? and will he bring me any thing from you? I hope that this week a special courier will recompense me for all my disappointed hopes.

I know all the nominations for the Council of State. I am delighted with them, because they discharge my debts to my political friends: they have kept their word with me. Bertin de Vaux, Villemain, Agier, Pressac, are provided for. Now I can withdraw in peace, which is the object of all my efforts. I wish to go into retirement for ever, and live for you and for myself. I desire to make war on no one. Let the Minister do what he can or will, he will no longer encounter me in his path; except, indeed, in the case of an attack upon the throne, or upon the public liberties.

The little time that I remain at Rome, I will try to offend no one. The clergy of this country have not committed the mistake of their brethren in France; they have not taken it into their heads to look upon me as an enemy. There is also in the higher ranks, here, a great deal more intelligence and tolerance. The heads of orders, especially, are very distinguished men, who have remembered what I said of the religious orders in "The Genius of Christianity." As to the artists, I do my best to pay them attention. I have already had the pleasure of being useful to some unfortunates. Society finds Mme. de Chateaubriand polite, and my dinners good. I will try to conduct things in this manner until spring.

Our affair of "Moses" (and it is the great affair) must now be under headway in your hands. I am longing to have the particulars; but far greater than all this is my desire to return to my Infirmary, go and find you every day at the Abbaye, walk with you, and build you a house in my garden worthy of receiving you, and of becoming your country-house during the summer.

ROME, Nov. 27, 1828.

All my happiness is in talking with you, and in thinking that sometimes our thoughts meet, in spite of the space that separates us. I took a walk in the Campagna yesterday, with poor Guérin. Ought I to pity him, ill as he is, when he is soon to return to the place of your abode? H. Vernet has written to me to announce his departure about the middle of next month. He will arrive in the course of January. But then our fate will be decided. "Moses" will be either dead, or will live a long life; you will be ready to start, or I ready to go and join you.

I thank you for having written to Mme. Salvage, that you *would come in the spring*. But, without taking into consideration all other events in life, it is probable, that, in view of the complete disorganization of the *Infirmary*, Mme. de Chateaubriand will want to go to France in the month of April; and I can easily get a *congé* to accompany her. If this happens, we can arrange our future together at Paris; but how much may happen in a few months! It is the regular post-day to-day; and I am, moreover, expecting a courier from the Foreign Affairs every moment. I therefore hope to have some lines from you before closing this letter.

Noon.

I received by the regular courier your letter of the 18th. You are pleased with me. The Lord be praised. You are coming in the month of March: that is still better; at least, if I do not go and fetch you! You have seen M. de La Rochefoucauld; he consents to give the choruses: thus all yields to your sweet and irresistible influence. Your last letter was dated the 6th: you announced that Taylor would read before the Committee the following Wednesday, and would give you the particulars on Thursday, which was the 13th. By your letters after the 13th, therefore, which will reach me perhaps through M. de Ganay, I shall know what the Committee say. You know that it will be necessary for you to say a word to Ladvocat; but he himself is strongly in favor of the matter. I will make an arrangement with him for the printing and the preface. My sheet is finished; and I must finish with it, until day after to-morrow, Saturday, 29th.

Rome, Nov. 29, 1828.

That M. de Ganay is extremely annoying, always leaving Paris, and not leaving. Couriers arrive in succession, without letters from you; for I suppose all *your letters* are in the hands of M. de Ganay. God grant that he may arrive one of these days! The last letter I wrote I put in the post on Thursday. I have been much troubled with my rheumatism. Nothing new between Thursday and Saturday; for to tell you how sad I am away from you is nothing new. I am waiting to hear all the particulars about "Moses." I saw Mme. Salvage yesterday evening; she is a very worthy woman. To-morrow all the diplomatic corps dine with me. On the 9th of next month, I have my reception. Now you have my present position. Spring will come to console me. I shall see you again, and all troubles will be forgotten! I cannot write any more, having a

bad headache. I am going to walk along the Tiber, to get rid of it, if I can. Yours, until Monday and for ever!

ROME, Dec. 2, 1828.

M. de Ganay has arrived at last: he brings me three letters from you, of the 11th, 18th, and 21st of November. Many thanks. Be at rest about my feelings for you; nothing can tear them out of my heart; they will last as long as my life. I will talk no more to you about my old age: you I will find young at a hundred years.

Let our friends talk on the subject of "Moses." Bertin has also written to me on this subject. It is the mediocrity of the actors which worries him. What animates Mme. d'Ag—— is a certain antipathy — which is natural to her — to successes that have happened, or are to happen. Let things go on. "Moses" must try its luck, and be played. If it fail, it is of little importance to us; if it succeed in spite of all obstacles, a crown fits well, and people go over to the side of power. Therefore shut your ears to all these noises, or rather do not listen to them. Be as brave as I am.

They write me over and over again the same things about the Ministry, and I do not wish to hear any talk about such matters. I only want to die near you, either at Rome or at the Infirmary. I take no interest, therefore, in any thing that is told me. I have only a moment to post this letter before the departure of the courier. Thursday I will return to your letters. This of to-day is only a simple acknowledgment of their arrival. I am firm with regard to "Moses." Go on, and listen to nothing.

What trouble in that poor Infirmary! Ever yours.

Please say to M. Barante that I will reply (he wrote to me), and thank him for his obliging mention at the Academy.

I have just received despatches from the Morea. I shall probably send off to-night a special courier to Paris. Another opportunity to write to you, and receive, by return of courier, letters from you.

ROME, Dec. 2, 1828.

I wrote three or four days ago by the regular courier. By the special courier whom I am sending off this evening to Paris, I am now replying to one of your three letters which M. de Ganay brought me this very morning.

Yours of the 11th contains an admirable passage of Mme. Cottin's. But who is this man "who comes, who fills the whole

world?"[1] It is not M. de Vaine? That is a great pity! I should not be worthy of such homage, but I should like to have it paid to me by you.

I understand nothing of M. de La Rochefoucauld's letter. I do not know what article it is he speaks of. I only read now in the papers the army news. Far from mixing myself up with political articles, or *influencing them*, I am even ignorant of their existence, and do not take the slightest interest in them. But, whatever the article is, it is attaching to it too much importance to believe it is going to overturn the State. It is because we are not used to a representative Government, that we fall into these exaggerations. Does M. de La Rochefoucauld remember to-day even of what article he was speaking? Very well. The public, assuredly, will not remember it any better than he. Be sure to say to M. de La Rochefoucauld, that I am very well satisfied with my lot; that I wish for nothing; that I am much attached to the present Ministry; and that I regard my political roll in life as completely finished.

I have only one ambition left; and that is to have "Moses" either applauded or hissed. I will not put you into communication with Bertin: I know how he looks on the dark side; he will fill your head with a thousand plots going on against me All appears wrong to him. I think it unnecessary to enter into any explanation with the papers. "Moses" is played because it is played, and that is all. The explanation lies in its success or failure. A month before the representation, I will send Hyacinth to Paris with notes for Bertin, a preface for Ladvocat, instructions for the publication of the choruses in the papers; because, I suppose, they will shorten them on the stage, &c.

Your letter of the 18th mentions my little reception. Be tranquil on all points. The resemblance is not wholly perfect; and, if it were, it would only recall to me the trials which you have effaced with happiness. Your letter of the 21st at last informs me of the reading and its result. Let friends and enemies talk. "Moses" shall be played: do not listen to any one. My mind is firmly made up: the crown of Sophocles on my white hairs would not become me ill. If I do not obtain it, I shall be entirely consoled; if by accident I do, perhaps I shall please you better: that is sufficient to make me brave the danger.

I hear all sorts of stories about the Ministry: people are always imagining that I wish to be Minister; and that I shall be, willing or not willing. Nothing is farther from my thoughts.

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[1] Mme. Récamier quoted this passage from an unpublished manuscript of Mme. Cottin's. It referred to M. Azaïs.

I desire nothing. I am really frightened at the few years that remain to me, and, like a miser surprised at his expenditure, I henceforth wish only to divide my treasure, that is so nearly exhausted, with you.

Believe — believe truly, that all my life is yours.

I am sending off M. de Mesnard, one of my attachés, as special courier to Paris. He is an excellent young man, with whom I am much pleased; and he will return to me as soon as possible. He will bring me your letters.

Next Tuesday is my grand reception. I am going to have a tomb raised to Poussin; the bas-relief to represent one of the compositions of the great painter. It is my idea: do you like it? I have had some Frenchmen set at liberty; others I have assisted with my purse. Finally, I am doing as well as I can. I still suffer with headache and rheumatism. A thousand tender remembrances. How happy I am in loving you!

ROME, Dec. 4, 1828.

The regular courier of the day before yesterday, and my special courier, M. de Mesnard, who will go and see you, carry my letters in reply to yours brought by M. de Ganay. I have exhausted the subject of "Moses." I have nothing more to say to you, except to beg you to hasten on the representation. You know my ideas as to the choruses: I should like a happy innovation, — a great many strophes to be simply declaimed, and scarcely any thing but the refrains sung; and only some passages in the intervals of the strophes, to mark the light, pathetic, or serious motives. Harps, tambourines, and trumpets ought to be almost the only instruments. The double music, in the third act, — the one gay at a distance, the other near and sad, responding by echoes to each other, must produce, it seems to me, a grand effect. The choruses, grouped on the mountain in the fourth act, will present, I think, a beautiful spectacle.

I have already mentioned to you, that I should send Hyacinth the first part of February. He will remain with you until after the critical period: you will employ him on errands, and send him back to me as a courier, to acquaint me with the death or resurrection of the prophet. I have another plan to submit to you. I am ignorant of my destiny and my future. If nothing happens this winter, the Infirmary will absolutely require me to make a journey to France in the spring. I shall, therefore, ask for leave of absence; and reach Paris about the last of April, where I shall pass three months with you. Then I shall go to the waters, of which I have an extreme need.

After that, we can arrange to meet on the frontier of Italy at the beginning of September, and return together to Rome. What do you say to this project? You see that you are my only thought.

It is post-day; but it will bring me nothing from you, as the mails left Paris before the departure of M. de Ganay.

The post is in, and justifies my prediction. In writing so often, you are not like a woman.

ROME, Dec. 6, 1828.

I am reduced to repeating what I tell you in every letter, that I am very unhappy here without you. Behold me in the midst of all the honors of the grand reception, that takes place next Tuesday! The gentlemen have made some blunders. They did not invite the cardinals properly. Great talk! This crime against etiquette must be repaired. You know how all this suits me, and what occupation it is for me! But I must yield to my fate. On Saturday, the 13th, I shall be transformed into a prebendary. The Duke de Laval was enchanted with this; but to me it is a punishment. From fête to fête, I shall reach, I hope, the good, the true: I shall find you again. This hope prevents me from dying under the weight of my honors.

I have finished quite a long memorial on affairs in the East, and I am expecting a trustworthy courier to pass it over to M. de La Ferronnays. I think I have cleverly traced out the course to be pursued, in order to promote the general interests of civilization, and the particular interests of France. La Ferronnays asked me for my ideas: I communicate them to him. The Council and the king will at least know that I am good for something, and understand the work I am about.

"Moses" is another affair. It is in your hands. It will prosper, because all goes well in which you are concerned. I long to know how the thing progresses,—if the actors are learning their parts; if they are going on with the music, and the painting of the scenery. Hérard, as I have told you, will hand over the fifteen thousand francs. Here is another letter closed, without one received from you!

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* ROME, Dec. 9, 1828.

Imagine my pleasure at getting your letter of the 28th ult., by the special courier! Yet it gives me an inkling of your injustice and your suspicions, quickly falsified by my two letters received at once. Will you never be ashamed of this bad habit?

So then poor "Moses" is brought to a standstill by a quar-

rel! But I do not mean to joke on this matter. Whether Taylor stays or goes, the prophet must re-appear in this lower world, to live or die here. I should prefer that Taylor should be present at his re-appearance; because he undertook it willingly, is intelligent, and our money arrangements are made: but, if that is impossible, arrange the affair, I beg of you, with the new-comer and M. de La Rochefoucald.

You tell me to fear nothing. I assure you that I do not fear any thing. I feel myself strong to brave defeat. But, whatever may be the good-will of the public, there is always something inaccountable in its movements; and, do what you may, envy and enmity have their indefeasible rights. As to the proprieties (*les convenances*), I do not concern myself in the least about them. I am entirely above the susceptibilities of the old salons.

See how we understand each other. You say to me, that I must ask for leave of absence in the spring; and I write you, that, if nothing happens, I shall come back to France in April, and afterward go to the waters, and from there we will arrange to meet on the frontier of Italy, and return to Rome together. Does that please you?

I have also told you, that I will send Hyacinth, a month before the appearance of "Moses," to do your errands, take a preface to Ladvocat, and see after the journals.

Yesterday I went to the Academy Tiberine, of which I have the honor to be a member. I heard very clever speeches, and some very fine verses. What a loss of talent! This evening, I have my grand reception: I am in dismay about it whilst writing to you.

The great affair you are arranging for me with M. de Barante amuses me. Your attachment and your illusions make you call that "the world." You bring me to life again. I am not the less dead, for all that; I must take myself off. To leave you would be my only and painful regret. I can hardly cease writing to you: how could I stop loving and seeing you? I shall write on Thursday.

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* Rome, Thursday, Dec. 11, 1828.

Well, the reception went off remarkably well. Mme. de Chateaubriand is delighted, because she had here all the cardinals on the earth. In the memory of man, never has there been seen a larger or more brilliant reception. In fact, all Europe at Rome was present, with Rome. I will say to you, that, since I am condemned for some time to this business, I like to do it as well as any other Ambassador. Our enemies do not like to see us obtain any kind of success, even the most trivial;

and to succeed in a department in which they consider themselves without a rival, is to punish them. Next Saturday I transform myself into a prebendary of San Giovanni Laterano, and on Sunday I give a dinner to my fellow-members. A gathering more to my taste takes place to-day. I dine at Guérin's, with all the artists; and we are going to decide upon your monument to Poussin. A young aspirant full of talent, Desprez, will make the bas-relief, taken from a picture of the great painter; and Lemoine will do the bust. In this case, we must have only French artists.

To complete my story of Rome, Mme. de Castries has arrived. Alas! she is another of those little girls whom I have trotted on my knees, like Césarine. The change in this poor woman is pitiable. Her eyes fill with tears when I recall to her her childhood at Lormois. What a life hers will be henceforward! for it seems to me all its delights are gone. What isolation! and for whom, great God? The best thing for me to do, you see, is to love you still better, and to be with you again as quickly as possible. If my "Moses" descends the mountain happily, I will borrow from him one of his rays, to re-appear rejuvenated and brilliant in your eyes.

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* Rome, Dec. 13, 1828.

Imagine my vexation. I return from my ceremony at San Giovanni Laterano, perished with cold, very tired; but hoping to find the courier arrived with a letter from you. No courier: he has failed to-day; the Apennines are covered with snow. I have only a moment to write these two or three lines, so as not to lose the courier myself. Fortunately, I have written to you every time lately long letters. My dinner with Guérin passed off remarkably well. All the young men were delighted. It was the first time that an Ambassador has dined with them. I announced to them the monument to Poussin: it was as though I had already honored their ashes. I am going also to subscribe to the monument that they are raising to Tasso, your friend. I shall be obliged to leave you until Monday. Take care of "Moses." Ever yours.

Tuesday, Dec. 16, 1828.

I have just received your short letter of the 29th of November, and your longer letter of the 1st of December. How I thank you! But you are a little too proud. You boast to me of your sacrifice; you tell me that you have a "horror of writing." And what about me, then? and do you write to me

nevertheless, as I write to you, *three times a week?* The truth is, that you have metamorphosed my nature, and that I no longer recognize myself.

I am writing by this same courier to Hérard, to give to you the fifteen thousand francs. Take them home with you, and get the successor of that poor Taylor to enter into our interests. I suppose that we shall be delayed a month, which will bring us to the end of March instead of February. You know that the grand events of my life have always occurred in Holy Week.

You say that my projects of retreat form a great contrast to the wishes of the public. In the first place, your friendship blinds you; and, in the second place, my desire to have my last years completely to myself and for you is very sincere and decided. All things warn me it is time to retire, — my health, the character of my ideas, fatigue, and weariness of every thing. I shall retain my place for a reasonable time, so as not to appear fickle; but, when I see you in the spring, we will most certainly fix the time for my retirement. I am writing to you just after a feverish turn, which lasted all night: it is nothing; but I am very tired, and my head is very painful. I have absolutely given myself up to one fancy, which is perhaps the childishness of age: it is to see "Moses" hissed or triumphant.

I read in the "Globe" M. Lenormant's letters. They give me great pleasure. I should prefer, however, a page of your prose to one of his. Cousin always pleases me by a certain *abandon* of style. As to his philosophy, it is nothing at all to me. There is a Father Ventura here, who has just dedicated to me a Latin work; a man of violent and positive principles, but he has a very different head for metaphysics from M. Cousin. I have written twice to M. de Barante.

I am discouraged when I think I must wait a month before getting a reply to a letter. A thousand things will have happened before this letter reaches you. You yourself will not feel the same when you receive it as you did when you wrote the letter to which it is a reply. I have told you what I should like to do in the spring, about going after you. If M. Lenormant goes to Greece, it cannot be before March or April. We will arrange to do what you prefer. I expect much from you by M. de Mesnard. I do not suppose that he will return before the 10th of January.

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* Rome, Dec. 18, 1828.

In place of wasting my time and yours in recounting the facts and actions of my life, I like better to send them to you

all condensed in the "Journal of Rome." The only thing of consequence in it is our monument to Poussin. Alas! almost another year has passed over my head. When shall I rest myself near you? When shall I no longer waste on the highways those days lent me to put to a better use? I recklessly squandered them while I was rich; I thought the treasure inexhaustible. Now, when I see how much it has diminished, how little time there is left to love you, my anguish is great.

But are there not long years beyond the tomb? If I had the philosophy of Cousin, I would describe to you that heaven, where I shall expect you, where you will find me again, full of grace, beauty, and youth. Poor and humble Christian, I tremble before the "Last Judgment" of Michael Angelo. I know not where my future abode will be; but, if it is where you are not, I shall be very unhappy. I have told you a hundred times of my projects, and of all my plans for the future, — the Rue d'Enfer near you: this is the only New Year's wish that I utter for myself. Ruins, years, health, loss of every illusion, — all say to me, "Go away; retire; finish." I look forward to you only, and in a corner of my imagination to "Moses." Still, however, it would not take much to make me throw that readily in the fire.

You desire that I should do something to mark my sojourn at Rome. It is done: the tomb of Poussin will remain; it will bear this inscription: "F. A. de Ch. to Nicholas Poussin, for the glory of Art and the honor of France." What is there for me to do here now? Nothing; especially after having subscribed to the monument of the man you love the most, *after me*, — Tasso.

Many thanks for your few words of the 3d. I do not need that china[1] to think of you; and, really, I do not know that I shall ever make use of it in Rome. I trust you will be just as successful, in regard to "Moses," with M. de La Rochefoucauld, who seems to me like a fierce lion. That Ahasuerus could break my fragile work to pieces like a sauce-boat. I will write on Saturday.

ROME, Dec. 20, 1828.

To return to the china. The service is not, thanks to M. de La Bouillerie, a complete present from the king. I pay for part of it. This service, taking into account delays, can scarcely reach me before the end of January. If it is not shipwrecked on the way, it will scarcely appear three times on my table before my departure for Paris. There are men who can

[1] A service of Sèvres china, given by the king.

be turned from their purpose by the consideration of a beautiful piece of china. My principle is always to settle myself in a place as though I were going to remain there, and then leave an hour afterward, if it is necessary.

Speaking of M. de La Bouillerie, I have not replied to what you said to me about poor Thierry. Where is he? I have received neither letter nor book from him; but M. Mesnard has orders to bring me the new additions. I would like to write to him, and take up his affair again, about the household of the king.

I am talking of things that you will have forgotten all about when you receive this letter. The distance that separates us is infinite. Mme. de Chateaubriand's health is not good; mine is not much better. My retirement from affairs has become a fixed idea with me: I carry it with me into society and on my walks. In thought I amuse myself embellishing my solitary little home near you. I fancy myself doing nothing more, writing nothing more, except some pages in my memoirs; and courting oblivion with all my power, as formerly I courted fame and publicity. France will remain free, and will owe her constitutional liberty almost entirely to me. Foreign affairs will follow their course. They are controlled in Europe by very poor men, — men who have disciplined barbarism, and who rejoice in the peril in which they have put Christian civilization by their want of foresight. France, properly guided, can save the world one of these days by means of her arms and her laws. All that is gone by with me. I shall rejoice in my tomb; and, while waiting for death, I would pass the rest of my short life with you.

In your last letter, of the 3d, you have preferred to talk of the china, rather than of "Moses;" but you say that you will speak of that in your next. Taylor's downfall retards very much our affair. Will his successor be as enthusiastic about it? will he agree to the same arrangements? will the music be ready and learned in time, &c.? And then the terrible Sosthènes![1] What a poor creature I am, in the midst of all this! But you will save me.

Rome, Dec. 27, 1828.

Six hours after the departure of the courier of Thursday last, the 25th, a special courier brings me a short letter from you, of the 16th. This very short letter is all that you condescend to give me in reply to a dozen long letters from me. It

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[1] M. de La Rochefoucauld, Superintendent of Fine Arts. — Ed.

is doubtless more than I deserve; but, when one is so far away, nice long letters do so much good! This letter tells two things, — that Villemain has been to speak to you about "Moses;" and that M. Pasquier wishes to be Minister. I suppose that the first came, in the name of all his friends, to confide to you their lively fears in regard to "Moses," — no actors, probable failure, impropriety, &c. Let them talk. Whether we succeed or fail, it signifies little: I shall not be in the least afflicted. Lord Byron, in Italy, easily consoled himself for being hissed in London, — and yet he was a poet; and I, a miserable writer of prose, what have I to lose? Let us go on, then, courageously. Do not allow yourself to be shaken.

You seem to want to re-assure me about the nomination of M. Pasquier. You judge me wrongly; you do not perhaps believe me sincere in wishing to abandon every thing, to die in seclusion. You are wrong. Now, in my state of feeling, I should bless the entry of M. Pasquier into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, because it would give me a chance to resign. I have declared a thousand times, that I shall only remain Ambassador while my friend de La Ferronnays is Minister. I should, therefore, give in my resignation instantly with extreme joy. Pray for M. Pasquier's success.

Noon.

M. de Mesnard has come with your letter of the 19th. No one could have made more despatch. Would you believe that your letter distresses me? In the first place, as for Ministers, made or to be made, I look upon all that as chimeras, agitations raised by ambitious men, without foundation and without reality; and, in the second place, I would not be Minister on any consideration. They may strike me off all the lists. I only want my *Infirmary* wherein to hide myself and die.

MM. Pasquier, de Barante, Villemain, write me also by M. Mesnard: thank the last two. The two Bertins, Agier, and Villemain, write to me likewise, to entreat me not to allow "Moses" to be played. Their reason is, that the actors are deplorable; that nobody cares now for tragedy, and especially for religious tragedy; and, finally, that this will prevent me from being Minister. This last reason has no weight with me; because, were I as near the Ministry as I am far away from it, I absolutely wish nothing more to do with politics. As to the other reasons, good or bad, I ought to yield to them at this moment. I do not wish it said, that I have been an obstacle to the formation of a Ministry, even if I am not a member of it, provided this Ministry can be useful to France. I do not wish

them to be able to say to me, "If you had not made a literary *scene*, we should have been Ministers to-morrow;" therefore withdraw poor "Moses." Say that I will think it over, and that it must be postponed until next winter. If fresh expenses have been incurred, pay them with the money you can draw from Hérard. Stop the distribution of the parts and the rehearsal, and get possession of the manuscript. I am convinced of one thing, that my *friends* would have been as much afflicted by my success as my enemies; and that, on the other hand, a failure would have injured them, politically speaking. So this is the double secret of their lively interest. Let us satisfy them. I shall neither be *their* colleague in the Ministry, nor a triumphant or defeated author. Heaven is opened to them.

A special courier arriving from Naples, and going back to Paris, will carry you this letter. Our correspondence travels fast. I send by this courier my memorial on Eastern affairs to M. de La Ferronnays. The success of the Turks horrifies me. Sebastiani did not tell you what others have written to me.

ROME, Dec. 30, 1828.

Ah well, poor "Moses!" The special courier, that left on Saturday the 27th, carried you the order to withdraw it. It was the last fancy of my life, — the folly of a man who is passing away; but, at all events, I should like to see it either succeed or fail. My sacrifice is the greater, as I have so few pleasures now; and my friends who require this sacrifice only wish it, so they say, that I may come into the Ministry; and I do *not wish to be Minister*. So I give up the crown of Sophocles for a crown of Pericles, which no one offers me; and which I would refuse, if it were offered. I abandon all for nothing. But to be loved by you, is not that a sufficiently beautiful crown? I ought to yield to my friends: they have linked their destiny with mine. If they did not obtain the places hoped for, and "Moses" was played successfully or otherwise, they would tell me that it was I who ruined them, because they were associated with me: they would make me responsible for their own mistakes. I sacrifice myself therefore. It is not the first time, that, in seeing what ought to be done, I have given up to those who obliged me to take the wrong course. I have always been found ready, every time I have been asked, to sacrifice my own interests to those of others.

But perhaps we may be able to go on with our plans some future day, when these gentlemen have risen where they wish to rise; when my retreat to the *Infirmary* will prove that I

really wish for nothing. Shall I not be free then to do as I choose? Yes: without doubt. But, in the first place, one must live; and this is a great difficulty with me. Then, how do I know whether events, accidents, will permit us to think of "Moses"? Shall we ourselves care about it? May not our ideas have changed? I could still say of myself to-day, —

> "*Quelquefois un peu de verdure*
> *Rit sur le glace de nos champs;*
> *Elle console la nature,*
> *Mais elle sèche en peu de temps.*"[1]

But my frost will not be gladdened by any verdure, and nothing will console me but you. Let us drop this sad subject.

I think I told you that I sent my big memorial to M. de La Ferronnays by the last courier. The only thing wanting to complete my disgust for political life would be to see the triumph of pestilence, slavery, and organized barbarity; and minds narrow enough to applaud this triumph, and not see its consequences to the liberties of the nations and to civilization, even when they are approaching.

Seven o'clock, P.M.

I have received your letters of the 9th and 11th: they are full of cajoleries. Do not give yourself so much trouble to coax me: you are sure of your success. Simply, then, suspend "Moses." I consent to it. As to the Ministry, you see that my letter agrees with your ideas. While M. de La Ferronnays is Minister in name, nothing is changed during the interim in my position. I will do, therefore, absolutely nothing. I will wait. I shall be in the same position as when M. de Rayneval had the interim.

In the space of a few months, I have consolidated affairs in Rome. I think that His Holiness is pleased with me; and I think that the artists are not discontented with me. This short journey of de La Ferronnays is of some weight. I do not wish to be the means of its ruining him by my precipitation and impatience. I have taken some pains to do my best on a small stage. I have not seemed to disdain any thing, not even balls. Now, I will go, when the time comes, to find you again with transports of joy. Quiet is to me before every thing else now.

As to that Ministry of the Fine Arts, with which your imagination pleases itself, we have not come to a Ministry yet. Let

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[1] "Sometimes a warm ray of sunshine revivifies our frosty fields. Nature is consoled, but it is only for a moment."

us wait. And, above all, do not think that I consider myself *Sophocles* and *Pericles*. I am too old to be so foolish. Ever yours.

. . . . .

1829! I was awake, and thought sadly of you, when my watch marked the hour of midnight. We ought to feel ourselves less heavily burdened as time carries off our years; but, on the contrary, that which he takes from us is a weight with which he overwhelms us. I wish you happiness and a long life. Never forget me, even when I am no more. I shall have to leave you some day. I will go to await you. Perhaps I shall have more patience in the other life than in this, where I find three months without you of immeasurable length.

I receive this morning all the French. Mme. Salvage dines for the first time at the Embassy. I like that woman, because she talks to me about you. I have also taken Visconti into my friendship, because he always asks me when you are coming. He has found an excellent place to make an excavation. We are going to begin it. If I find any thing, I will share it with you. This will be my first pleasure in Rome. I promise myself a kind of gratification in being present at the first stroke of the spade. Suppose we find some *chefs d'œuvre:* that is a sort of interest peculiar to Italy and Greece.

I have written to you twice about withdrawing "Moses." Take care of the manuscript: it is the only one I have with the last corrections. My heart is still sore about it. We sacrifice with difficulty the last illusions of life; and this is another lesson to detach me from every thing but you. I must quit you to dress. You can imagine what a punishment this is to me. A happy New Year! It will be happy, since in a few months I shall be with you.

ROME, Jan. 3, 1829.

I renew my wishes for a happy New Year. May Heaven grant you health and a long life! Love me above all things, and do not forget me when I shall be no more. I have good hope; for you have remembered well M. de Montmorency and Mme. de Staël. Your memory is as good as your heart. I said to Mme. Salvage day before yesterday, that I knew no one in the world so beautiful or good as you.

I passed an hour yesterday with the Pope. We talked of every thing, and of the highest and most serious subjects. He is a very accomplished and enlightened man, and a prince full of grace and dignity To crown my political life, I needed only

one thing, — relations with the Sovereign Pontiff: that completes my career.

Would you know how I pass the day, and exactly what I do? I rise at half-past six; breakfast at half-past seven on a cup of chocolate, in Mme. de Chateaubriand's chamber; at eight, return to my Cabinet, write to you or attend to business, if there be any; the details for the French establishments, and the poor French are quite numerous. At noon, I dress; at one o'clock, I take a large cupful of asses' milk which does me infinite good; and walk afterward two hours in the Roman Campagna, with Hyacinth. Sometimes I pay a formal visit, before or after walking. At four o'clock, I come in, and dress for the evening; at half-past seven, I go to a party with Mme. de Chateaubriand, or I receive a few friends at home. Between ten and eleven o'clock, I go to bed; and always think of you. The Romans are already so used to my *methodical* life, that I serve them for a timepiece, as I did your neighbors of the Abbaye. Am I not verily a very tiresome Ambassador, and very different from the Duke de Laval? Never have there been so many strangers in Rome as there are this year. Last Tuesday, the whole world was in my salon.

What! the courier arrives, and brings me a letter from you of the 20th of December, the day after the departure of M. Mesnard! I can scarcely believe my eyes. Do you want to turn my head? You have seen Bertin, so much the worse for you: he will soon make you look on the dark side of things. Cousin does not wish that I should abdicate; but, as I do not reign, I have nothing to lay down. This very day, Jan. 3, the special courier must have brought you the authority to withdraw "Moses." The sacrifice is made; but I will never forgive my worthy friends for it.

I hope that you have the manuscript secure along with the others. I have given you an account of the grand reception. Be without fear, as you are without reproach.

Rome, Jan. 6, 1829.

In opening the journals that came yesterday, I find my name on every page, sometimes for one thing, sometimes for another. You should print the letters that I write to you: they would be in piquant contrast to the designs that they attribute to me. They would see a poor dreamer, who in the first place is absorbed in you, and who in the second is bent upon taking refuge in some hole to end his days; and who is so little interested in politics that he grieves over "Moses" that they will not play: and that is the precise truth. The public treat

me as Tasso was treated here: it is doing me too much honor. They want to disturb my remains, I was beginning to sleep so well.

I am still occupied with the tomb of Poussin, and our contemplated excavation. Visconti promises marvels. As for me, I really am only trying to cheat myself: I am not here in spirit; I am living beyond the Alps with you. Meanwhile time passes, and I am a little more sure now of the moment when I shall rejoin you, which does me more good than I can express to you.

My literary labors are suspended: I am only doing some reading for my "History of France." I am a little uneasy about Ladvocat, from whom I hear nothing more: can he be bankrupt? I hope not, but still I am reconciled to it in advance; I should have a legitimate reason for making the public wait for the two volumes I still owe him: you see that, in either case, I reap some benefit.

My diplomatic labors are confined to few things. I have not, however, managed the king's business badly here; and I have forwarded a memorial of some importance on the war in the East. I have also finished quite a remarkable despatch, and I am expecting a courier by whom to send it. I have seen the Pope lately. I am always enchanted by the grace, dignity, and moderation of the Head of the Christian world.

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* Rome, Jan. 8, 1829.

I am all out of sorts: the most beautiful weather in the world has been followed by rain, so that I have had to give up my solitary walks, which were the only pleasant part of my day. I used to wander in the deserted Campagna thinking of you: the past and the future were blended together in my thoughts; for formerly I used to take these same walks, and they are my pleasantest recollections of Rome. I go once or twice a week to the spot where the English girl was drowned. Who remembers to-day that poor young lady? Her countrywomen gallop along the river bank without thinking of her. The Tiber, a witness of so many other sights, is not in the least concerned about it: besides, its waters are constantly changing, and, though as pale and tranquil as when they passed over that creature so full of hope, life, and beauty, they are no longer the same waves. How empty and fleeting this world is!

But here I am wandering off without perceiving it: pardon a poor hare, wet and kept in his seat by the rain. I must relate to you a little story of my last reception. There was a great crowd at the Embassy: I was leaning against a marble table, saluting the people who came and went. An English

lady, with whose name and face I was unfamiliar, approached me, looked me full in the face, and said to me, with that accent with which you are familiar, "Monsieur de Chateaubriand, you are very unhappy!" Astonished by such an address, and such a manner of beginning conversation, I asked her what she meant. She replied to me, "I mean that I pity you." So saying, she took the arm of another English lady, and was lost in the crowd; and I did not see her again the rest of the evening. Do not be alarmed. This odd stranger was neither young nor pretty. I was pleased with her, nevertheless, for her mysterious words, so much in keeping with my state, and with what I have written to you.

The papers continue to gossip about me. I do not know what galls them. I thought that I was as much forgotten as I desired to be.

I am writing by this courier to Thierry. He is at Hyères, very ill. Not a word of reply from M. de La Bouillerie.

No courier to-day: that often happens, now that the rivers and streams overflow. Remember this; and do not work upon your imagination, if my letters are delayed. Only, you will be fifteen days without any, and then receive five and six at once. On Saturday.

ROME, Jan. 10, 1829.

Poor Guérin is packing his trunks, for which I am very sorry. I have grown much attached to him. He received me on my arrival, and we have together looked mournfully at Rome from the top of the Villa Medicis. He will still remain some time after the arrival of Horace. I wanted him to take refuge at the Embassy; but he did not wish to do it. In the place of that, I will give him a grand dinner, with Horace and all the young artists; after which he, more fortunate than I, will go and see you, and give you an account of my life.

The plan for the tomb of Poussin is fully decided upon. It is very good. The only thing in question is to turn out a confessional from the place we want in San Lorenzo, in Lucina; and it is a great job.

Yesterday I passed an hour, tête-à-tête, with Mme. Salvage, talking of you. I told her, what I say to every one, that you were coming to join us in the spring, or I should go after you. As we draw nearer the Carnival, the crowd increases in the salons. There is nothing now but grand public re-unions, where one cannot even edge in a word. I am going to take Mme. de Chateaubriand, and show her Naples, early in Lent; I shall return by Holy Week, to leave at Easter with the *congé*, which I hope to obtain.

I repeat to you all these calculations that I have gone over a hundred times, because they beguile somewhat the pain of absence. It seems to me, that, in counting the days, I make them disappear, as, when the moment after we count the gold to pay off a debt, we no longer have the sum we have taken from our hoard. Alas, my poor hoard is sadly diminished! I can see the last crown of it. Will I have a letter from you this morning?

ROME, Jan. 12, 1829.

Another special courier! I shall pass for the busiest man in Europe. I am sending another attaché to Paris, M. du Viviers: he carries the report of a long conversation I have had with the Holy Father. It is essential that the Government should be informed of this conversation before the opening of the Chambers, on account of the speech from the Crown; and this despatch, even in cipher, could not have been trusted to the post.

But the great thing is to write to you, to tell you at my ease how much I love you, and how unhappy I am without you. The rest is nothing to me.

See and admire how destinies are interlinked. If they had let us alone, we should have had "Moses" played. "Moses" would then have been printed with a grand preface. That would have made the publishers and subscribers patient, who would then have waited quietly for the publication of the history. Instead of that, I am prevented from adding something, perhaps, to an innocent literary renown; and exposed to a lawsuit with publishers, in order not to lose an imaginary place, which I should refuse if it were offered to me. If we had only been allowed to follow our own instincts, we should have been better off. You were weak, on account of a false ambition for me. If you had only said to me, "Do not yield;" but you saw fortune for me where there was no fortune. You allowed yourself to be taken in by those animated conversations; and you have trusted to some articles in the papers. It was evident, and I have always said so to you, that there would be no change in the Ministry. But still it was your will, and your will is my law; and, after all, I yielded to a generous sentiment, since my friends thought that their prospects would be much compromised by the representation of "Moses," — much more than mine.

My letters, with which I overwhelm you, are the faithful reflex of my heart. I have all that could be desired in the way of success, in kind attentions, and cordial welcome; but I am more than ever convinced, that my political and social

life is at an end. It is your society, united with the most profound retirement, that I need now. I am only occupied with one thing, — my health; because I have a great desire to live some time longer for your sake. Asses' milk and exercise are working marvels; and in the spring, which is drawing near, I hope that you will find me entirely restored. The only effect of parties is to derange my system, and give me such ennui that I am ready to throw myself out of the window. I put a good face on it, however, in order to torment my enemies, and force them to confess, that I am well received wherever I go.

I have just had a little triumph over the Naples Embassy. I have got it so arranged, that the couriers for the Morea shall be no longer sent into Calabria, but to Ancona, where I can establish one of my Secretaries of Legation to direct the correspondence. By this means the Roman Embassy controls all the affairs of Italy, and the attachés and secretaries are overjoyed. M. de Blacas, who was the centre, loses his power; and M. de Vitrolles, at Florence, will have less material for *secret notes*. What mere nothings these triumphs are! Say nothing about this.

Poussin will have a monument raised to him: I have subscribed for that of Tasso. The excavation will begin perhaps the end of the week. Have you any further commands? As for me, I beg of you to write to me oftener, and *simply by the post*. Your letters alone give me the courage to wait until April: do not refuse them to me. I suppose they will send du Viviers back to me by the end of the month: you will take advantage of his departure; and then there are also the couriers to Ancona.

This time I am writing to you alone, with the exception of a line to Bertin, whose influence upon you I still fear. I have paid lately all my debts, and replied to everybody to whom I owed letters, — Pasquier, Villemain, Thierry, &c. It is you from whom I am expecting to hear. I do not believe in a change of Ministry. I am convinced that the Ministers will have a great majority. Being at a distance, I can judge better than all of you, who are too near to see well.

I forgot to say to you, that, if we are obliged to come to a rupture with Ladvocat, the contract of sale is in the hands of M. de Lemoine, or of that good fellow, Henri. Speaking of the latter, I heard that you were so kind as to receive him. How admirable you are!

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* Rome, Jan. 13, 1829.

Yesterday evening I wrote you, at eight o'clock, the letter that M. du Viviers is to carry to you. I am now writing by

the regular courier, that leaves at noon. I have a little story to tell you. You know the poor ladies of St. Denis: they have been to a large extent abandoned, since the arrival of the great ladies of the Trinità de' Monti. Without being opposed to the latter, I and Mme. de Chateaubriand have ranged ourselves on the side of the weak. For the last month, the ladies of St. Denis have been wishing to give a fête to the *Ambassador* and *Ambassadress*: it came off yesterday, at one o'clock.

Imagine a theatre, arranged in a kind of sacristy, the stage facing the church; for actors, a dozen little girls, from eight to fourteen years old, playing the "Maccabees." They had made their casques and mantles themselves; they declaimed their French verses with a spirit and an Italian accent which was the funniest thing in the world. There was a niece of Pius VII. there; and a daughter of Thorwaldsen, and of Chauvin the artist. They were wonderfully pretty in their paper costume. The one who played the part of the high-priest, a girl of thirteen, had a long white beard, which both delighted and plagued her. She was continually obliged to arrange it with her little white hand.

For spectators, there were ourselves, a few mothers, the nuns, Mme. Salvage, two or three abbés, and about twenty little boarders, — all in white, with veils. We had cakes and ices brought from the Embassy. The piano was played between the acts. Imagine the excitement this fête must have caused beforehand in the convent, and the recollections that will follow it. The finale was a *vivat in æternum*, sung by three nuns in the church. It is you for whom I would like to live eternally. I close. You must be tired of my letters and my insipidities.

I have seen in the papers my dinner with Guérin, and the history of our tomb for Poussin. Adieu until Thursday.

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* Rome, Jan. 15, 1829.

Last night, we had wind and rain, as in France. I pictured to myself how the storm was beating against your little window. I was again in your little chamber; I saw your harp, piano, your birds; you played me my favorite air, or Shakespeare's: and I at Rome, far from you, in a great palace, four hundred leagues and the Alps between us! When will all this come to an end? I have received a letter from that clever lady who used sometimes to come to see me when I was Minister. Judge how well she pays court to me: she is a violent Turk. Mahmoud with her is a great man, who has advanced his nation, &c. The fact is, all the Bonapartists detest the Russians, against whom the power of their master was broken. By an instinct

of despotism, they still love the Turks, and not the memory of Alexander, who has contributed so largely toward giving France her present institutions. They see in the slavish rabble of Constantinople the avengers of the retreat from Moscow, and the enemies of the Charter. On this last point they are secretly in harmony with the "Quotidienne." They preach the Charter to-day only as a weapon against legitimacy; but they will be caught: the Charter is a rock of safety; and they will have liberty and the Bourbons in spite of themselves.

Rome ought to teach me to despise politics. Here liberty and tyranny have equally perished. I see the ruins of the Roman Republic confounded with those of the Empire of Tiberius. Are they not mingled now in the same dust; and the Capuchin, who in passing sweeps with his robe this dust, — does he not make still more apparent the vanity of so many vanities? However, I return in spite of myself to the destinies of my poor country. I would endow her with religion, glory, and liberty, without thinking of my inability to crown her with this triple aureole.

I have a little letter from you of the 2d January. You have been ill, and are so still perhaps. I can think of nothing else; and I shall count the minutes until I have heard from you again. I shall be extremely sorry, if M. de La Ferronnays quits the Ministry, and especially if he is seriously ill. He is an excellent man, and wholly loyal. Besides, his retirement will change my position; for I have said repeatedly to those concerned, that I would not be Ambassador under any Minister replacing my noble friend. It is time to put this letter in the post.

Rome, Jan. 17, 1829.

The journals have re-assured me somewhat in regard to La Ferronnays. I have just written to him to entreat him to remain. His retirement would be very injurious to France. M. Pasquier, in entering alone, would cause a division; and, as to me, I am out of the question. If, however, La Ferronnays is obliged to retire, that would bring on, as I have already told you, the natural *dénouement* of my position.

It is known that I remain Ambassador only because he is Minister. I have declared it a hundred times, and it is this very declaration that has annoyed the claimants for the place so much; for what was to be done with me? What a provoking man I am! You know, in case of retirement, what Mme. de Chateaubriand's pretensions are. Whatever happens, the result will be to bring me back to you, which is all that I desire in the world.

A M. Prin, recommended by Charles Nodier, has written to me for authority to undertake the prosecution of my *rights of authorship*. I replied to him, that "Moses" would not be performed. You have now all my answers by the special Naples courier and by M. du Viviers: the one is due on the 4th, the other on the 21st of January. I am going to present a crowd of Frenchmen to the Pope this morning. On my return, I may perhaps find a letter from you, and then I will close mine.

The post has come in: nothing from you. I see that La Ferronnays is doing better, and is working with the king. God be praised! I must leave you until Monday.

His Holiness was extremely gracious to me, and that before seventeen witnesses.

Rome, Jan. 20, 1829.

I received yesterday your letter of the 5th. The advice that our friend gives us is the worst of all. To ask for a *congé* at this time would seem as though I were ambitious and intriguing, and I am very far from being either. It is necessary that they should come to a decision in Paris before I make any. All must be concluded there: then I shall act accordingly. I think this course will be the most proper and dignified. My position, moreover, is the simplest in the world, because it is not the result of the moment. Everybody knows that I only accepted an embassy for love of peace, — to give the majority to the Ministry in a difficult time, by attaching my name to the Government, and thus breaking the formidable opposition that I had created. But everybody also knows, that I only consented to absent myself from France on account of my friendship for M. de La Ferronnays, who had been Ambassador under me, and who entered into all my views of foreign affairs. I have said and written, that, the moment M. de La Ferronnays ceased to be Minister, all the conditions of my contract would be fulfilled, and that I should no longer be Ambassador. Consequently my affair reduces itself to a single question: Is M. de La Ferronnays Minister of Foreign Affairs, or is he not? If he is not, the question of his successor is nothing to me. Whether it be M. Pasquier, M. de Rayneval, M. de Mortemart, it is of little importance: I retire. I wish to withdraw quietly and without publicity. I will not send in my resignation when I hear of the nomination of the successor of de La Ferronnays. That is too hard. I will simply demand a *congé*, go to Paris to arrange my affairs, and submit my reasons to the king. Mme. de Chateaubriand will remain here,

and will not leave Rome until after Easter, when something will be decided about my future.

The rôle of Minister of Foreign Affairs will be difficult this year in the Chambers. The present state of Europe will often call him to the Tribune, and the points of attack are visible and numerous. What is to be thought of the men who talk to you of the balance of Europe, disturbed, do they say, by the success of the Russians in the East (as if they had been successful)? Do not these men perceive, that, since the last treaties, this balance has not existed for France; that all the other powers have grown, whilst we have lost our colonies and a part of the old French territory?

All my friends have written me on the Ministerial position. I have quite a strange and long letter from M. Pasquier. My opinion is that the Minister will stand. With regard to the public liberties, there is nothing to reproach him with; and, when the opposition on the floor cannot bring good reasons to their support, they do not obtain the majority. But I think merely that the Minister can be put in danger by foreign affairs. Any retrograde steps in the noble career that he has followed so far for the independence of Greece would ruin him. To remain Minister henceforward in France, he must not injure either the *liberty* or the *honor* of France. All the foreign and home affairs of our country turn upon that.

They talk to me about two articles in the papers, — one in the "Quotidienne," the other in the "Gazette." The first says that I have become a Jesuit; the second insists that I am coming — and that I have so written — to make an 18th Brumaire. That makes me laugh, and proves at least that people concern themselves about me. You know that on principle I never reply to the papers.

Concerts are now the fashion in Rome. Very soon we shall have balls. When all these calamities are over, Lent will follow, which will bring me back to you. I live only in this hope: it aids me in supporting the heavy weight of the days. Villemain has given me news of poor Thierry. I am going to write to him. Well, I think I have written to you a sufficiently long letter. Confess that I am much changed. Ever yours.

M. de La Rochefoucauld has written to me on the subject of the china. I shall thank him by this courier. I forgot to tell you that there will not probably be any Art Commission sent to the Morea, since our Expedition is returning. Consequently, M. Lenormant will simply land at Toulon or Marseilles. That will agree better with the affairs of your niece, and my *congé* at Easter.

Above all, take good care of your health. Live long — long

years, so that there shall be somebody in the world who thinks of me.

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* Rome, Jan. 22, 1829.

While they have the kindness to busy themselves about me in Paris, — judging from the papers, — and imagine me doubtless in a state of great excitement, do you know what I am doing here? Walking peacefully with a cane or gun in the Roman Campagna; and, if I am forming any political project, it is to retire for ever from affairs. They are imagining something very different probably. Being fully decided upon the course to take in regard to an approaching event, I am most profoundly tranquil, as it always happens when one's mind is made up. I am very anxious that M. de La Ferronnays should remain, or at least that there should be an interim, during which he will hold the title of Minister. If he goes out, the choice will fall neither on M. Pasquier nor me. They will take M. de Mortemart from the "centre;" thinking by that to settle every thing. It is of little importance to me. I will demand a *congé*, and present to the king my resignation, and the desires of Mme. de Chateaubriand rather than my own.

I have, therefore, no curiosity about what to-day's post will bring; for it will not be a letter from you. You do not write twice in succession, even where interesting circumstances are in question, and I care nothing for papers and letters from others. Besides, why am I talking to you about all this? You will not receive this letter until long after the event has happened. It must certainly take place before the session; and the Chambers open on the 27th, and this is the 22d. See with what disdain Time, that has swept away Rome, treats Pasquier, me, and all this little troop of men — moved by vulgar ambitions — who are disputing over the Hôtel of the Rue des Capucines.[1] What a great pity it is!

I will say to you, that I am in despair at our return from the Morea! Poor Greece! What millions of money expended for nothing! Ah! if I were still in the opposition!

I will close my letter after the arrival of the courier.

The courier has come. As I expected, nothing from you. I must take you as you are; but confess that you give up to me all the advantages of the attachment.

I see long articles in the journals wherein my merits and demerits are conscientiously weighed. They give themselves too much trouble. I tried to find something by which I could

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[1] The Bureau of Foreign Affairs. — Ed.

really judge of M. de La Ferronnays' health. I do not see any thing; and it is on this point that a few lines from you would have given me pleasure. Good-bye until Saturday, the 24th.

The "Constitutionnel" of the 11th has come. It informs me that it is M. de Rayneval and Monsieur the Keeper of the Seals who are to have the portfolio in the interim. That announces an approaching *dénouement*. My determination is not to be shaken. I *go out with M. de La Ferronnays;* only I will do it with moderation and soberness.

ROME, Jan. 24, 1829.

Either you did not know of it, or you were not able to take advantage of the departure of the special courier that left Paris on the evening of the 14th, and brought me the official news that M. de La Ferronnays had been granted a *congé* of three months, and that M. Portalis was to have the portfolio *ad interim*. That suits me very well; for it will give me time to look about me. I need not precipitate things, and I can the more easily prepare for the future.

This Ministerial arrangement is that of men who fear to take a decided stand. It is only postponing the difficulty. I beg of you to let the facts of the case be known. I repeat them again. I have never thought, nor ever admitted the idea, of returning *without leave*, any more than a soldier would quit his post before he was relieved by his officer. I have written to M. de La Ferronnays, that I should ask a *congé* for myself, after Easter, a time when it is given to everybody, and which would not bring me to Paris much before the end of the session. As to the embassy itself, I have always declared that I should only remain Ambassador while my friend M. de La Ferronnays was Minister. That is the sole and only condition of my treaty: I will resign, therefore, when he resigns, no matter who succeeds him. But my only demand is to be allowed to bury myself in my retreat, and I trust the king will be pleased to grant me this favor.

> "*Ami rends moi mon nom! la faveur n'est pas grande;*
> *Ce n'est que pour mourir que je te le demande.*"[1]

This morning the regular post may bring me a letter from you; but it will be of earlier date than those I have received from other friends, and will not tell me any thing new of politics. I should be pleased, I assure you, to talk to you of

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[1] "Friend, give me back my name: the favor is not great. I ask for it only to die."

something else besides these dreary politics; to fill my letters with accounts of my solitary walks in Rome, and my attachment to you. It is in spite of myself that I return to a subject that occupies, unhappily, my life; but which at last is coming to an end.

My "Memorial on Eastern Affairs" reached the Ministry at the very time of M. de La Ferronnays' accident; and I do not know whether the Council has seen either that or my important despatch sent subsequently by M. du Viviers. This accident of M. de La Ferronnays is a great misfortune. I sincerely deplore it. I still hope that in three months he will be able to take back his portfolio; but I find it difficult to conceive how M. Portalis can keep this portfolio at the Tribune of the Chambers for three months. I see that Bertin, in his "Journal," has given the lie to the "Gazette:" he is too kind. I do not need to be defended against the "Gazette."

CHAPTER XVII.

1829.

Letters of M. de Chateaubriand from Rome, relating to Excavations in the Campagna; Death of Leo XII; Obsequies of the Pope; Conclave; Arrival of the French Prelates. — Letter from the Duke de Laval to Mme. Récamier. — Letters from M. de Chateaubriand, relating to the election of Pius VIII. — Note to Cardinal Fesch from M. de Chateaubriand. — Note to Canaris. — Letters from M. de Chateaubriand, relating to the *Miserere* at the Sistine Chapel; The French journals on the new Pope; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs; His farewell visit to the Pope. — Letter from Queen Hortense to Mme. Récamier. — Last letters of M. de Chateaubriand from Rome.

ROME, Jan. 29, 1829.

TUESDAY, the 27th, the day I wrote to you, you heard the king's speech; and I gave my first ball of the season. There will be two more, and then my door is closed for the winter. The time of our meeting will be drawing near. I have talked so much about politics in my letters of late, that in this I shall not mention the subject. I have also so bad a headache this morning, that I can scarcely collect my thoughts. But my heart is well, full of you, and always ready to tell you how much it suffers from your absence. I have again taken up my "History of France," to finish it: in looking over the manuscript, I am convinced that I shall be able to deliver the two volumes that I promised to Pourrat in the letter of which I have sent you a copy.

Have you heard from M. Lenormant? Is he coming back? Does he go to the Morea? Yet, if the *savans* are going to replace the soldiers, it seems to me very foolish. I am interested on his and your niece's account, especially as your plans are somewhat dependent upon theirs.

If I suffer so much already in this climate during the winter, how will it be in the summer season? At present, it is raining in torrents. The day of my ball here was a deluge; still the crowd was great, and the people danced and supped as though I were M. de Laval. We have a lot of French who come here one after the other. I noticed among the women,

Mme. Beugnot and Mme. de Montesquiou. It is a great pleasure to meet with the ideas and language of one's country.

But this hospitality is ruining me; and I have not received, like Blacas in returning to Ghent, the price of the wine in which I have the happiness to drink the king's health. On Monday I begin a modest and small excavation in a corner. I should like to find some little thing for you: I am not lucky.

31st.

Your last little letter was very unjust, as I have already said to you; but you beg me not to scold you, and I will not. Can you doubt me now? Have I not, in these three months, made amends for all the sorrow that I have been so unfortunate as to cause you in my life? When I talk to you about my trials, it is in spite of myself; my health is much impaired, and it is possible that this is the cause why I look upon the future in so gloomy a light. I should be very sorry indeed to quit you.

The last political crisis has also had an effect upon me: on one side I have seen friends who, neither knowing nor wishing to know my state of mind, have taken umbrage at a literary whim, as though it were going to ruin them and me; on the other, men who, not judging me more fairly, have thought that I wished to be Minister at all hazards, and have allowed their invincible repugnance to me to become public in spite of themselves.

I have seen common men exalted, and those who had attained to some dignity humbled: it was not worth while thus to take off the mask. You know whether I asked or wanted any thing. The result of this double trial has been to make me slightly bitter and undecided.

I have received a letter from Ladvocat, who tells me that his affairs are more flourishing than ever. I work a little on my history, when my health and the Carnival balls permit. I am still incredulous about the Scientific Expedition to the Morea. I cannot understand why they want to send *savans*, and withdraw soldiers.

We are waiting here for the king's speech. I am not very curious about it, because I could, without having seen it, say beforehand what it contains, — peace with Europe; brilliant expedition into the Morea, where the Sultan will take good care to come, when we have left; prosperous finances; regrets for the absence of a faithful and able Minister, adored by all parties, who will soon return, &c. Is not that it? And the Chambers will reply appropriately.

I see by the journals of the 21st, that the fight is beginning for the Ministry, and that they are afraid of M. de Polignac. I wash my hands of the whole affair. Embrace Canaris for me. I will reply to him. Yours, for the rest of my miserable life.

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* Rome, Feb. 5, 1829.

Torre Vergata belongs to the monks: it is situated very near the Tomb of Nero, on the left as you enter Rome, in the most beautiful and secluded spot in the world. An immense number of ruins are lying round on a level with the ground, and covered with weeds and coal. I began an excavation day before yesterday (Tuesday), after I left off writing to you. I was accompanied only by Visconti, who directed it, and Hyacinth. The weather could not have been finer: it was a sight well worth your seeing. Twelve men, armed with spades and shovels, and digging up tombs and the vestiges of houses and palaces in the midst of a profound solitude. I only breathed one wish, and that was for you. I would very willingly consent to live with you, under a tent, in the midst of these ruins. I put my own hand to the work, and brought up some fragments of marble. The indications are excellent: I hope I shall find something to compensate me for the money wasted in this lottery of the dead. I have already a block of marble large enough for the bust of Poussin.

This excavation will become the aim of my walks. I am going to seat myself every day among these ruins. To what century, to what ruin, do they belong? We are, perhaps, turning over illustrious ashes without knowing it. An inscription may possibly throw light upon some historical fact, destroy some error, establish some truth; and then, when I have left the place, with my dozen half-naked peasants, silence and solitude will resume their reign over all.

Think how many passions and interests were formerly at work in these deserted spots. Masters and slaves were here; the happy and the unhappy; the beautiful and the beloved; ambitious men, who wanted to be Ministers; and now nothing but some birds and myself; and, in a short time, we too shall be gone. Tell me, do you think, taking the end of all things into consideration, that it is worth while to be a Member of the Council of a petty king of the Gauls,—I, a barbarian of Armorica, a traveller among savages of a world unknown to the Romans, and Ambassador to one of those priests who were thrown to the lions?

When I invoked Leonidas at Lacedemonia, he did not answer.

The noise of my steps at Torre Vergata will awaken no one; and, when in my turn I am in my grave, I shall not even hear the sound of your voice. I must hasten, therefore, to your side, and stop all these reflections on the life of man. There is nothing good but retirement, and nothing true but an attachment like yours.

See "Les Débats" of the 23d, which says that a Minister of Foreign Affairs will be appointed the following Sunday, and Sunday was the 25th. It is therefore decided. God be praised! Nothing from you! . . .

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* Rome, Feb. 7, 1829.

The post will bring me this morning the solution of the problem. Will it be the continuation of the interim, as I think it will? Will it be the nomination of Rayneval, or another Minister of that description? One thing is certain, that nothing important has happened; otherwise I should have received the news already by a special courier.

I went yesterday to have a talk about you with Mme. Salvage. We said that your last letters were very sad. I have discovered the reason, in the disappointment about "Moses," the dead calm following the projects in regard to the Ministry, and the proposed journey of your niece.[1] I continue to hope that this journey will not take place, and especially that you will not go. It would be insane. To make excavations! Where? since Athens is in the hands of the Turks, and Olympus is the only place in all Peloponnesus that offers any chances. Besides, the monuments of Olympus were almost all of bronze; and it is known that the Goths melted them down in their second invasion of Greece. I have received a long letter from General Guilleminot. He gives me a lamentable account of what he has suffered in his cruises on the Grecian coasts. Now Guilleminot was Ambassador; he had great ships and an army under his orders: but to go, after the departure of our soldiers, into a country where there is not a house standing, or a field of wheat, among a scattered population forced to become brigands from want, is not a practicable plan for a woman only three years married.

I am going to look after my excavation this morning. Yesterday we found the skeleton of a Gothic soldier, and the arm of a woman's statue. That was finding the ravager with

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[1] M. Lenormant was then in the Morea, as one of the members of the Scientific Expedition. Mme. Récamier and her niece proposed to join him. This journey did not take place.

the ruin which he had made. We have great hopes that we shall find the statue this morning. Rome is all alive about the excavation, and in general they wish me success. If the architectural ruins that I am finding are worth it, I will not break them, as is usually done, to sell the bricks: I will leave them standing; and they shall be inscribed with my name. They are of the time of Domitian. We have found an inscription indicative of this fact. This was the golden age of Roman art.

On my return from the excavation, I find your little letter of the 23d. You see where I was, when I was thought to be at the gates of Paris. I have received no courier from any one. I am the most tranquil man in the world. So the interim continues in the hands of M. Portalis, as I foresaw. So much the better: that will give me time to prepare myself for events, and to deliberate calmly upon what I shall do when the time comes. But get well above all things: that must be done if I am to be at all happy.

ROME, Feb. 9, 1829.

The Pope is very ill. I am sending off a special courier to Lyons, to transmit a telegraphic despatch to the Government. These two lines will be posted at Lyons.

I received this morning your letter of the 27th, in which you tell me "Moses" is in your possession.

Feb. 10, nine, A.M.

The Pope has just expired. Is it not strange that Pius VII. should have died while I was Minister of Foreign Affairs, and that Leo XII. should die while I am Ambassador at Rome? Now my position is changed again for the moment, and my rôle here becomes of importance. The death of the Pontiff is an immense loss to the moderate men.

This evening an *attaché* will leave with a long letter for you.

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* ROME, Feb. 10, 1829, eleven, P.M.

I wanted to write you a long letter; but a long despatch that I have been obliged to write with my own hand, and the fatigue of these last few days, have worn me out.

I am sorry for the death of the Pope. I had obtained his entire confidence. Now I am charged with a great mission. It is impossible to know what will be the result of it, and what influence it will have on my destiny.

The Conclaves last ordinarily two months; this would still leave me free at Easter. I will shortly talk over the whole matter with you.

What do you think they found the poor Pope doing, before he was taken ill? Writing his epitaph. When they tried to divert him from these gloomy notions, he said, "No, no: it will be over in a few days."

Mme. de Chateaubriand is quite ill, and has been in her bed for three days. All the Carnival pleasures are over, thank God! No more dinners, balls, &c. The English are leaving, and are going to dance at Naples and Florence.

I am going to have now a multitude of couriers. I shall take advantage of them, and you must do the same.

I beg you will send for Bertin, and read him some portions of this letter, and tell him that it is impossible for me, situated as I am now, to write to anybody. Recommend him, from me, to eulogize the Pope and Bernetti. They could not have been more tolerant or more moderate. Witness their conduct in regard to the ordinances, and the confidence and esteem the Pope showed to me on every occasion. Bernetti is in every respect a statesman.

ROME, Feb. 12, 1829.

I only wish to reiterate to-day, that the Conclave in prospect will get through with the election, in all probability, before Easter. Nothing is changed with regard to my movements or your plans. I cannot foresee what new political fortunes this unexpected event may create in my life. I will talk about this in my next.

I am reading your newspapers. They often give me pain. I see in the "Globe," that Count Portalis is, according to that paper, my declared enemy. Why? Do I ask for his place? He gives himself too much trouble. I do not concern myself at all about him. I wish him all possible prosperity; but still, if it be true that he wants war, he will find me all ready. It seems to me they are talking nonsense about every thing, — about the *immortal* Mahmoud, and about the evacuation of the Morea. The most probable chances are, that this evacuation will put Greece back again under the Turkish yoke, with the loss to us of our honor and forty millions. There is a prodigious amount of wit in France, but a lack of judgment and good sense. Two phrases intoxicate us. We are carried away by words; and, what is worse, we are always ready to decry our friends and exalt our enemies. But is it not curious that

the king should have been made to hold in a speech[1] my own language on "*the union of the public liberties and the throne*," for which I incurred so much displeasure? And the men who made the Crown speak thus were the greatest advocates of the *Censure*.

Moreover, I am going to see the election of the Head of the Christian world. This spectacle is the last great spectacle I shall witness in my life. It will close my career, and I shall go back with inexpressible joy to my little house in the Rue d'Enfer.

Now that the festivities in Rome are over, affairs are beginning. On the one hand, I shall be obliged to write to the Government all that happens; on the other, to fulfil the duties of my new position. I must compliment the Sacred College, and be present at the funeral ceremonies of the poor Pope, whom I regret, and to whom I was attached precisely because few loved him; and the more so, because, having feared to find in him an enemy, I found a friend, who, from the height of St. Peter's chair, gave a formal lie to my Christian calumniators. Next, the French cardinals are going to fall upon me. I have written to make representations touching, at least, the Archbishop of Toulouse.

In the midst of all this stir, the monument to Poussin is in process of execution. The excavation is succeeding. I have found three beautiful heads; a torso of a woman, draped; an epitaph on a young sister by a brother, which touched me. Speaking of epitaphs, I told you that the poor Pope had made his on the eve of the day that he was taken ill, predicting that he was very soon to die. He has left a writing wherein he recommends his indigent family to the Roman Government. It is only they *who have loved much* that have such virtues.

The post is in, and brings nothing from you. My cousin Bonne[2] only tells me that she has seen you, and that you have been ill. Return to health and life for my sake.

ROME, Feb. 17, 1829.

Now that all my first couriers are gone, let us discuss our new position.

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[1] The speech from the throne, on the opening of the Chambers, contained this sentence, "Experience has destroyed the prestige of some foolish theories. France knows, as well as you, on what basis her happiness rests; and those very persons who would seek it elsewhere than in the sincere union of the royal authority with the liberties that the Charter has consecrated would be publicly disowned by her."

[2] Mlle. d'Acosta.

The Conclave, taking into consideration all chances to the contrary, cannot last more than three months, and probably will be much shorter. Three months from to-day will bring us to the 12th of May. I purpose leaving after Easter, which falls this year on the 19th of April. Thus, calculating all things, the event will make no change in my movements, as far as the limit of the Conclave is concerned. That is the essential point for us. Will it change at all my political destiny?

My mission, no doubt, augments every day my importance; but will it not furnish a pretext for completing the Ministry, without knowing whether it is agreeable to me, and giving me any Minister they please,—sure, as they will then be, that I will not give in my resignation during a Conclave, and that my duty will require me to remain at my post in a state of rage? But what will they gain by that? Will I not give in my resignation the day after the election of the Pope; and, after having perhaps rendered some essential service in preventing the nomination of an Austrian or fanatical Pope, shall I not be higher in public consideration? Mme. de Chateaubriand is more stormy than ever. To-day there is trouble with the servants, and that in the midst of my despatches, the death of the Pope, and the Paris political agitations.

I was present at the first funeral ceremony for the Pope, at St. Peter's. It was a strange mixture of indecorum and grandeur. Blows of the hammer that nailed up the coffin of a Pope; some interrupted singing; the light of the torches mingling with that of the moon; the coffin raised finally by a pulley, and suspended in the darkness, in order to place it above a door in the sarcophagus of Pius VII., whose ashes are to give place to those of Leo XII.,—picture to yourself all this, and the ideas such a scene suggests.

I beg of you to send for Bertin, and read to him all the first part of this letter: he ought to know what I think, and I have not the time to write to him in detail.

Du Viviers has come with your short letters of the 7th: many thanks. Bertin writes to me that I *am Minister*, and Hyde de Neuville almost the same thing. The king has read the grand "Memorial," and also my important despatch on my conversation with the Pope: he is *enchanted*. The courier that brings you this letter carries also a long despatch to the Government, the preparation of which has the more amused me, inasmuch as I constructed it out of the correspondence M. de Laval had with me at the time of the last Conclave, and of fragments of my *own instructions*. These instructions show a very remarkable moderation, such as I would make them to-day. I ask Portalis if I am *to follow to-day the spirit of them*. Judge

whether that will be agreeable to the Council; but judge also how much it has diverted me.

They have just brought to me the cat of the poor Pope. He is entirely gray, and as gentle as his old master.

ROME, Feb. 21, 1829.

I could talk to you at length of the Polignac profession of faith, if my mind was not pre-occupied with what is going to happen to me in Paris, and of the unexpected change the death of this excellent Pope is yet to effect in my life. The talk here is that the Conclave will be extremely short: it begins day after to-morrow. I expect, without being too sanguine, that it will end by Holy Week. Cardinals Pacca, Capellari, Gregorio, are much talked of: any one of them would be a good choice, and a Pope that would follow the moderate and conciliatory system of Leo XII. But you know that it is impossible to foresee any thing; and that our friends of all sorts must not imagine, above all, that I *can make a Pope!* Neither I nor any one can do any thing in this affair, except by wishes and prayers.

The excavation goes on finely; I am finding beautiful things. You cannot think what an interest the public of Rome take in it, and the good luck they wish it. When I am a whole day without finding any thing, the artists are in despair. I have the most elegant torso of a young woman, draped in an entirely new manner; three men's heads, of the best time of sculpture; and admirable marble architectural fragments. As the torso of the young woman was near the tomb where we found the epitaph of a brother to a sister aged twenty-five years, it may perhaps be a part of the statue of this sister. Do you not think I am very stupid to be talking to you about all this, in the midst of my affairs at Rome and Paris?

It is said that M. de Blacas is *very jealous* of my excavations. I fear I have persecuted my predecessors, — the one by my balls, the other by my excavations and monuments. Truly, they were not undertaken for that purpose.

I am already thinking of arranging the couriers who will apprise you of the nomination of a Pope, and my return to France. If I have had the glory to be the first to acquaint the Government with the death of Leo XII., nothing more is wanting to me as Ambassador.

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* ROME, Feb. 23, 1829.

The obsequies of the Pope were finished yesterday. The paper pyramid and the four sconces were beautiful enough,

because they were of immense size, and reached to the cornice of the church. The last *Dies iræ* was admirable. The author of it is an unknown man who belongs to the Pope's chapel. To-day we pass from sorrow to joy. We chant the *Veni Creator* for the opening of the Conclave, that takes place this evening; then we shall go every evening to see whether the votes are burned, whether the smoke comes from a certain stove; and the day when there is no smoke, the Pope will be elected, and I will start to join you, — which is at the bottom of all my projects.

The speech of the King of England is very insulting to France. What a deplorable expedition, that of the Morea! Do they at last begin to feel it? Guilleminot has written me a letter on this subject that makes me laugh; because he would not write to me in this way, unless he presumed that I was to be Minister.

Pay attention to this: if by accident I am offered the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, — which I do not at all believe, — I *would not refuse it*. I would go to Paris. I'd talk to the king, and *arrange* a Ministry, *of which I should not be one;* but, in order to attach my name *to my work*, I should propose for myself a position that would be agreeable to you. I think — and you understand my thought — that it concerns my *Ministerial* honor, and is necessary to wash off the insult Villèle put upon me, that the portfolio of Foreign Affairs should be given me for a time. It is the only honorable way in which I can come back into the Administration. That done, I withdraw immediately, to the great satisfaction of all candidates, and pass the rest of my days in peace with you.

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* Rome, Feb. 25, 1829.

Since the departure of my first courier bearing the announcement of the Pope's death, I have had no news from Paris. Imagine my impatience. I am ignorant of what is wanted, and whether the French cardinals are coming. While waiting, I am doing what I can, and things are going on. From what has been done, we may hope for a prompt election and a moderate Pope: it is all that I can desire. My couriers are all ready.

Death is among us. Torlonia died yesterday evening, after two days' illness. This is a great loss to Rome. His was, as you know, the only princely mansion open to strangers. Then, too, the season is drawing to a close. People are beginning to scatter, and are leaving for Naples. They will return for a time at Holy Week, and then quit for good. Next year there will be other travellers, other faces, other society. I hope that

I shall not see it. There is something too sad in this treading on ruins.

The Romans are like the remains of their city: they see the world pass by at their feet. But for me, who have neither the desire nor the power to stop the world, I prefer a place near you, which is not fleeting, and which I can always keep. I picture to myself all these people that I have just seen, going back to divers countries of Europe; all these young English misses, so fresh and fair and rosy, returning into the midst of their fogs. If, by chance, thirty years hence, some one of them should revisit Italy, who will recognize her? Who will remember having seen her dance in such a palace, of which the masters are no more? St. Peter's and the Coliseum are all that she herself would recognize. I scrawl worse than ever, for I am extremely ill.

I am expecting every hour a courier from Paris. He ought to have been here before. I have been left already a long while without instructions. You know that the Duke de Laval apprised me of the death of Pius VII., when I had already received the news through M. de La Tour-du-Pin. I was obliged to scold him. Portalis cannot pay me back in the same coin, as he will have seen that my couriers travel fast.

It is certain that a Pope will at least be elected by Holy Week, if not a great deal sooner. This period coincides with the expiration of La Ferronnays' *congé*, and with my demand for one at Easter. Mme. de Chateaubriand is very miserable, and already talks about preceding me. The climate of Rome frightens her. It is true that we see only the dead, who are carried through the streets all dressed. One of them is regularly borne by our windows every time we sit down to dinner.

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* Rome, March 5, 1829.

I have not been inclined to speak to you about my health, because it is a very tiresome subject; but I have not been well since I have been in Rome. I arrived here ill, and my sufferings have increased. I tell you this now, because I fear that I may be obliged to shorten my letters.

While I am ill, I hear that La Ferronnays is getting well: he takes long rides on horseback, and his recovery passes in this country for a miracle. God grant it may be so, and that he may be able to take back the portfolio at the end of the interim! How many questions that would decide! and our affair would be simplified. The whole thing would be reduced to a *congé* to go and see you, and fetch you.

Our cardinals are coming. Will they stop at the Embassy, as I propose to them? You see what another disturbance this will make in my habits and domestic peace. I hope to have a letter from you this morning. Would you believe, that, though it is eighteen days since they heard the news of the death of Leo XII. at the Foreign Affairs, I have not received one word from the Government? It is only through the papers that I heard of the punctual arrival of my couriers.

Nem.

I have your letter of the 20th. I am not surprised at all the astonishing things that Bertin promises. I know what he is; but you will see that I shall find myself *Big John, as heretofore.*

There is one notion that must be guarded against; and that is, thinking that I can make a Pope at my will. Popes *are no longer made.* It is possible to *prevent* any one particular person from being Pope, but you cannot *make* one. I am hopeful, however; because there are five or six excellent men among whom the choice is likely to fall.

Really, I do not know what makes you so sad: if it is my absence, that will soon be at an end. It is I, I assure you, who would often like to die. What am I doing on the earth? Yesterday, Ash-Wednesday, I was on my knees in the Church of Santa-Croce, near the Naples gate, which has for its foundation the ruins of the walls of Rome. I heard the monotonous and lugubrious chant of the monks in the interior of this solitude; and thought, verily, that I should like also to be under a frock, chanting among these ruins. What a place to put ambition to rest, and to contemplate the vanities of life and the world!

Rome, March 12, 1829.

My cardinals are arriving in succession, and I am lodging them all. Saturday they will be shut up in the Conclave; and, with God's assistance, we may have a good Pope next week. This harmony is going to disappoint those furious people of the "Gazette de France." It is certain that they were counting on divisions publicly announced, and they have made me pass very uneasy nights. What happiness, if the election should be over before this little note reaches you!

If we have a Pope in eight days, you see that nothing would be changed in my projects, and that I should be perfectly free at Easter. They would not refuse a *congé* to a man arriving with an olive branch in his hand.

* Rome, March 14, 1829.

I am immersed in affairs which daily increase in importance. I have discovered many serious things of which I have informed the Government. I do not know whether the king will be satisfied with my services; but I have never had so many political embarrassments in my life, so many anxieties and successes. We are coming to a *dénouement* of some sort. The French cardinals have gone into the Conclave very well disposed. I at least did all in my power to instruct them, and to unite them with the Ambassador of the king. The King of Bavaria has been to see me *in full dress*. We talked an hour together, and *spoke of you*. I am delighted with this sovereign, a Greek *scholar* and *liberal*, who in wearing a crown understands himself, and sees that the present cannot be nailed to the past. He dines with me on Thursday, and wishes no company.

Your letter of the 2d has come. Many thanks to M. Royer-Collard. We shall know all about that in the course of a month, and sooner.

March 17.

Every morning we expect a Pope, and every evening our hopes vanish away; but we shall certainly have one by Holy Week, at the latest. It will be about that time when this letter reaches you. We are now in the midst of great events in this lower world. A Pope to make, who will it be? The emancipation of the Catholics, will that come to pass? A new campaign in the East, where will lie the victory? Will we take advantage of the position? Who will conduct our affairs? Have we any one capable of perceiving all its relations to France, and of profiting by it according to events? I am convinced that they do not even think about it in Paris, and that between the salons and the Chambers, pleasures and laws, joys of the world and ministerial inquietudes, they concern themselves about Europe like "Colin-Tampon." I, in my exile, am the only one who has the time, from the height of my ruins, to think of chimeras, and look around me.

Yesterday I took a walk, through quite a storm, on the Tivoli road. I came across an old Roman pavement, so well preserved that one might imagine it was newly laid. Yet Horace once walked over the stones that I was treading on, and where is Horace? Let us return quickly to you, never more to leave you. This is the result of all my reflections.

* Rome, March 21, 1829.

Well, lovely lady, I was right, and you were wrong! I went yesterday between two ballots, and while waiting for a Pope, to St. Onofrio. There are two *orange trees* in the cloister, and not a *green oak;* and I am very proud of the faithfulness of my memory. I went, almost with eyes shut, to the little stone that covers your friend: I like it much better than the great tomb they are raising to him. What a charming solitude! What an admirable sight! What happiness to rest there between the frescoes of Domenichino and Lionardo da Vinci! I should like to be there: I was never more tempted. Did they allow you to go into the interior of the convent? Did you see in a long corridor that ravishing head, though half effaced, of a Madonna, by Lionardo da Vinci? Did you see in the library the mask of Tasso, the crown of withered laurel, a mirror which he used, the letter in his handwriting, pasted on a board that hangs below the bust? In this letter, written in a fine hand, crossed, but easy to read, he speaks of friendship, and the *wind of fortune:* the latter seldom blew for him, and the former he often lacked. I was forgetting politics. No Pope yet; we expect one from hour to hour: in the meantime I shall reach the goal. Everybody seems to be in peace with me. Cardinal de Clermont-Tonnerre first writes to me that he is on the way, and that he claims my *ancient kindnesses;* afterward he alights at my door, resolved to vote for the most moderate Pope. Well, may it be as God pleases, who is the worker of all miracles!

You will have read my second speech. Thank Kératry for me, who spoke so kindly of the first: I hope that he will be more pleased still with the second. We will both of us try to render liberty *Christian*, and we shall succeed in doing it. What do you say to the reply that Cardinal Castiglioni made to me? Have I not been sufficiently praised in full Conclave? You could not have said any thing better in those days when you spoiled me with attention and adulation. What will the *Congréganistes*[1] and their gazette say?

You perceive that I begged you to thank Kératry. Bertin's quarrel has troubled me: De Vaux is very touchy. For two years I have taken the responsibility of Salvandy's articles, for fear of injuring the prosperity of "Les Débats" by denying them. It is certain that I have no thoughts of the Ministry, and this makes me so tranquil and indifferent to what goes on. I will take the chances as they come. I have only one idea, — to see you again. The rest signifies little.

[1] Members of a lay congregation directed by ecclesiastics. — Ed.

* Rome, March 24, 1829.

If I believed the rumors in Rome, we should have a Pope to-morrow; but I am discouraged for the time, and do not like to believe in such good fortune. You will understand that this good fortune is not political good fortune, the joy of a triumph; but that of being free to come back to you. Besides, when I talk so much to you about the Conclave, I am like a man with one fixed idea, who thinks that the world is only occupied with this idea. Yet at Paris, who is thinking of the Conclave? Who troubles himself about the Pope and my tribulations? French volatility, the interests of the moment, the discussions of the Chambers, excited ambitions, all have something else to do. When the Duke de Laval used also to write to me of his cares, I, wholly pre-occupied by the Spanish War, used to say on opening his despatches, "O good God! we have something else to think about." Portalis to-day is making me submit to the same thing.

It is, however, true that times now are altered. Religious ideas were not mixed up with political ideas as they now are throughout Europe. This was not the subject of the quarrel. The nomination of a Pope had no power then, as it has now, of troubling or tranquillizing the States.

Thierry has written to me by Hyères a touching letter. He says that he is dying; and yet he wants a place in the Academy of Inscriptions, and asks me to write for him: I am going to do it. My excavation continues to give me sarcophagi: the dead can only give what they have. Poussin's monument is progressing: it will be noble and elegant. You cannot think how well the picture of the "Arcadian Shepherds" does for a bas-relief, and how suitable it is for sculpture.

But all this is nothing: I must see you; we must again be united; and you must get rid of your melancholy for ever.

THE DUKE DE LAVAL MONTMORENCY TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Vienna, March 24, 1829.

You break the spell of silence in a charming way, by allowing yourself to be carried away more than is usual to you when you take pen in hand. It is not the weapon that you love; and yet I assure you, that, when you choose, when you dare to give yourself to your inspiration, you write charmingly, just as you talk; though this latter gift of yours is the better known and appreciated, and also the more powerful. I was inexpressibly touched by your last letter, and by your condescension in copying for me that passage from your letter from Rome. Knowing your aversion to writing, I fully appre-

ciated this act of kindness. It is true, however, that to read and copy what you know so well how to inspire, was not without sweetness.

I sometimes feel a little spiteful at knowing that you are so pleased; and I protest, that it is not from a bad heart. Listen: if, as it is very probable, and as my aunt informs me on your authority, M. de Chateaubriand has arrived, or is on the point of arriving, then there need be no hesitation about my taking steps to return whence I came. This winter has been frightful, — five feet of snow on the ground for three months. I want no more of the winter of the North. I should perish; and certainly I will not begin a second.

So much the better, if they are pleased with me so far, and satisfied with my work to the point of sending me commendation by every courier. It is another reason why my demand should be listened to. Talk over my interests with my aunt. To a greater degree than almost any one else you have the talent of showing off your friends to advantage, and serving them at the right moment.

My two aunts dote upon you. It is a spell that none of my blood have ever been able to escape. Three generations have been under the yoke.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

ROME, March 31, 1829.

M. de Montebello has arrived, and brings me your letter, with others from Bertin and Villemain. I am not so much struck as you seem to be at what has happened in the Chambers on the question of priority.[1] It is a defeat, without doubt, in a struggle unseasonably entered upon: but the ground of the question is so doubtful, there will be so many opinions upon it, that there is a chance of success remaining to the Ministry; and then, if the principal amendment of Sebastiani passes, the Minister will simply accept it, — though he has said he will not, — and all will be finished. What will not one do to remain Minister?

But of what am I talking to you? About old rubbish that will be over with a month before you receive my letter, and you will not even comprehend it. Let us talk, then, of things that are of all time, — such as these, that I love you more than ever, that I am going to see you again; for these rival struggles in the Conclave can hardly be prolonged much longer.

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[1] Relating to the law on the Communal and Departmental Administration. The priority was accorded to the Communal law.

They may deprive me of fifteen days more or less; but, when we are so near the end, we feel more resigned to a sacrifice.

What especially afflicts me is the departure of your niece. I shall at least arrive to take her place with you. If nothing can be arranged in France, we will return together to Rome.

My excavations are getting along finely. I am finding a great number of empty sarcophagi. I could choose one for myself, without my dust being obliged to expel that of the old dead, which the wind has already carried away. Empty sepulchres present the spectacle of a resurrection, yet they attest only to a more profound death. It is not life, it is nothingness, which has rendered these tombs deserted.

To finish my little journal of the moment, I will say to you that I went up to the ball of St. Peter's yesterday, during a storm. You cannot imagine what the noise of the wind was in the middle of the sky, around that cupola of Michael Angelo, and above that Christian temple which throws old Rome into the shade.

ROME, March 31, 1829.

Victory at last! After many fights, I have one of the Popes on my list, — Cardinal Castiglioni, under the name of Pius VIII.; the same cardinal that I supported for the Papacy in 1823, when I was Minister; the one that replied to me recently in the Conclave of 1829, giving me such great praise. Castiglioni is moderate, anti-Jesuit, favorable to the Ordinances, and entirely devoted to France. It is, in fact, a complete triumph.

A few lines, that I am going to have dropped in the post at Lyons, tells all that to Bertin; but send for him, in case by any chance they should not reach him, for it is necessary to foresee every thing. Please send also to Kératry, for the "Courier." Give him information that may be agreeable to him, and that will be useful to me. I am certain that the Conclave, before separating, has ordered a writing to be sent to the Nuncio at Paris, directing him to express to the king the satisfaction that the Sacred College has felt at my conduct. What will the "Gazette" say? What am I going to do now? No matter! I am going to see you again: that is my recompense and my joy.

Yet, after all, I have never been so unhappy and so tormented as I have been during this Conclave. Every thing at first was against me: the French cardinals were coming hostile, resolved not to put foot in the Embassy; I discovered intrigues and odious correspondence; I considered myself veritably beaten. Well! the cardinals stayed with me; they

voted as I wished them to vote; they chanted my praises: so you see what it is to be under the influence of your star.

I shall hurry off Givré to Paris, in two or three days, with despatches. I will write to you by him. Do not lose a moment in sending for Kératry. You will be *wise* enough not to bring them together. If Bertin is in the country, send for his son Armand, and, in default of him, Bertin de Vaux. In case Kératry is also absent, you can address yourself to Chatelain or La Pelouse, *gentlemen of the "Courier."*

ROME, April 4, 1829.

I have just received your letter of the 23d March. I notice in the "Constitutionnel" of the same date all the fight it has had with the "Messager" on my speech: next will come the reply of the Cardinal Castiglioni, which is all praises; then the nomination of that same cardinal for Pope. But the only question now is about seeing you. You are going to lose your niece: you will recover me again. Will that be a compensation?

I have asked for a *congé*. As to the Ministerial projects, I do not have them at all at heart. My decided inclination is for repose; and, if sometimes dreams of power still flit through my brain, they are only passing inspirations, not belonging to my natural state. Let us drop all that. I will see you very soon. Very soon you will be here, or I will be at the Abbaye-aux-Bois.

My health is not good. I do not walk out at all in the evening. I take care of myself as if I were somebody else. I take asses' milk twice a day. I walk two hours before my dinner, by rule. I take care of myself with extreme reluctance; and yet, in spite of all, I suffer. Day before yesterday, I thought I should stifle in the night; my gout or my rheumatism rose up to my stomach, and thence into my head. I am only a poor invalid now, whose heart remains wholly yours.

To-morrow my Pope is to be crowned; but the weather is frightful. It has rained in torrents for five or six hours. Wednesday I give a dinner to all the Conclave, and Thursday to the Grand Duchess Helena of Russia.

I forgot to say to you, that Cardinal Fesch, having conducted himself very well in the Conclave, and voting with our cardinals, I took a resolution, and invited him to dinner. He has refused in a very proper note, to which I replied by the enclosed: —

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO CARDINAL FESCH.

I would like, Sir Cardinal, to have replied sooner to the note that you have done me the honor to write to me. It

infinitely increases my regrets, and those of Mme. de Chateaubriand. Let us hope the time will come when all obstacles will be removed. Thanks to the magnanimity of her king, France is strong enough henceforward to defy recollections. Liberty ought to live in peace with glory.

I entreat your Eminence to believe in my devotion, and receive the assurance of my high consideration.

At the same time, M. de Chateaubriand sent to Mme. Récamier the following note for young Canaris: —

Rome, April 9, 1829.

My dear Canaris, — I have owed you an answer for a long while. You will excuse me, because I am so much occupied. Now, this is my advice: —

Love Mme. Récamier dearly. Never forget that you were born in Greece; that my country, become free, has shed her blood for the liberty of yours. Above all, be a good Christian, and submit to the will of God. Thus you will, my dear little friend, keep your name on the list of old, famous Greeks, where your illustrious father has already placed it.

I embrace you. Chateaubriand.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Rome, April 11, 1829.

Here we are at the 11th of April. In eight days, Easter will be here; in a fortnight, my *congé*; and then to see you! With this hope, every thing else disappears: I am no longer sad; I think no more of Ministers and politics. We are to meet again! that is every thing; I would give up the rest for a farthing.

To-morrow, Holy Week begins. I will think of all that you have said to me about it. Oh that you were here to listen with me to these beautiful *Misereres!* And afterward we would walk through the deserted spots of the Roman Campagna, now covered with verdure and flowers. All the ruins seem rejuvenated with the season, I among the number.

My big friend Bertin has profited by the opportunity. He has made very good use of the praises given by Cardinal Castiglioni; and you will have learned, four days afterward, that the cardinal was *Pope*, as a reward for his praises. I am waiting for the arrival of the post to close this letter.

I have a nice letter from you of the 30th. Like you, I regret Rayneval; but we could not be lucky enough to get him. I will do what I can for Andryane. I see by the discussion

that everybody is against the law. What is all that to me? I will be at the Abbaye-aux-Bois in a month, or even before.

See a portrait of *my Pope* by Cottreau. It is striking.

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* Rome, Wednesday, April 15, 1829.

I am beginning this letter on the evening of Holy Wednesday, on my return from the Sistine Chapel, after having witnessed the *Tenebræ*, and heard the *Miserere* chanted. I recollected that you had spoken to me of this beautiful ceremony, and on that account I was the more moved. It is truly incomparable, — that light which dies away by degrees; those shadows which envelop the marvels of Michael Angelo; all the cardinals on their knees; the new Pope himself prostrated at the foot of the altar, where, a little while before, I had seen his predecessor; that admirable chant of suffering and mercy rising at intervals through the silence of the night; the idea of a God dying on the cross to expiate the crimes and infirmities of men; Rome and all its *souvenirs* under the vaults of the Vatican. Oh, if you had only been there!

I like even the tapers, whose smothered light allows a white smoke to escape, — emblem of a life suddenly extinguished. What a fine place Rome is, wherein to forget and despise every thing, and to die!

Instead of this, the courier to-morrow will bring me letters, papers, anxieties. I will have to talk to you of politics. When will I have finished with my future, and have nothing more to do in the world than to love you, and consecrate to you my last days?

Holy Thursday, 16th.

I have your letter of the 3d. It is very sad. Your niece is going to leave you; but remember that she will return in a few months, and that I am coming to replace her, either for better or worse. You only write to me through necessity, you say. It is also through *necessity* that I write to you; but it is more pressing in my case, for it obliges me to send to you three long letters a week. See the difference in our attachment: I prefer mine.

I will do what Mme. de Montmorency desires.[1] As for M. de Laval, his bed is all ready: he has only to return in order to sleep in it.

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[1] The Duchess Matthieu de Montmorency asked M. de Chateaubriand, through Mme. Récamier, to solicit from the Sovereign Pontiff indulgences for the chapel of the Hospital of the Cross, which she had founded at Bonnétable, in memory of her husband's death.

I knew of the suppression of the "Gazette." That will make it easier to speak of Pope Castiglioni. I have so often discussed my position with you, that I will talk no more about it. We will let it alone. At the end of the month I shall have my *congé;* and now it is the 16th. I shall leave, or you will come; that is all. The thing will be decided when you receive this letter.

The "Quotidienne" of the 6th, that I have received, says that the ordinance for the nomination of M. de Rayneval will be in the "Moniteur" on the 7th. We shall soon see; but I do not believe it.

ROME, April 18, 1829.

The special courier, leaving day before yesterday, the 16th, carried you a very sad letter. I was discouraged by yours. Yesterday, Good Friday, I thought that I was going to die, like your best friend. You would have found at least this resemblance between us, and perhaps you would have loved us together. To-day I am very well: I cannot understand this state of health. Is it a caprice of the gout? Is it a warning to prepare myself; and is death touching me from time to time with the point of his scythe? You will find me much changed. I look a hundred years old; and it is a century of affection that I lay at your feet.

All my couriers will have arrived in Paris a long while before you receive this letter. You will have seen Givré and Boissy. You know all. Every thing also will be decided *provisionally* as to my fate; for I do not think that the Ministry is of a nature to take a definite course as long as it can be avoided. Your letters will decide me whether to start, or await you here. The world moves on so fast in France, that I am persuaded, that, at the moment that I am writing to you, nobody thinks any longer about *my* Pope; that the subject is dropped, and all controversy in the papers at an end.

The *gentlemen of the "Courier"* have not been very reasonable respecting Cardinal Castiglioni's speech. How could an old priest, a Roman cardinal, say any thing else than that all power came from God, which is moreover true: was he to talk like me? We spoil a great many things by these exaggerations. It would be well, that all men, whatever their habits, morals, country, age, held the same language. All power comes from God, without doubt, — that of *republics* as that of *monarchies;* that of *liberty* as that of *royalty*. The *gentlemen* of the "Courier" have not been good logicians this time. They are not the less honest men, whom I like and esteem.

Pius VIII., you can tell them, is more *constitutional* than

Leo XII. In all his letters he has told me that it was necessary to pay obedience to the *Monarchy according to the Charter*, — a truth which involves a compliment; and, as to our religious divisions, he does not mix himself up with them in any way, and will refer them, to be judged, to the piety of the king.

I am expecting a special courier next week. Whether it be favor, indifference, or disgrace, they must say something to me, and send me a *congé*. Rome in a fortnight will be only one vast solitude: I should like then to be in this desert with you.

I have your few lines of the 3d. You are a great deal too good to interest yourself so much in my being *Minister*. You did not know of the nomination of *my* Pope on the 3d, which would push forward Hyde de Neuville's plan, if things went on naturally in this world. But who knows whether the thing that ought to crown me will not send me back to my poor little Infirmary? I dream only of my garden, though I am not Diocletian. I see in the journals of the 8th, that the amendment of the Commission has been rejected. I have always thought that that victory of the Minister, far from strengthening him, would weaken him; because it was brought about by the help of his enemies.

Rome, April 20, 1829.

You can easily imagine what was my surprise at the news of the withdrawal of the two laws. Wounded vanity makes men children, and gives them bad counsels. Now what is going to be the result of all that? Will the Ministers try to keep their places? Will only a part of them go out, or all together? Who will succeed them? How compose a Ministry, &c.? I assure you, that, apart from the cruel pain of not seeing you, I should rejoice to be put aside, and not to be mixed up with all these enmities and irrationalities; for I think they are all wrong.

In the midst of this squabble, Boissy and Givré will arrive with despatches that in ordinary times would be of the highest importance; but now they will not seem much to men who are going out. What signifies to-day a Conclave, that is over with, and the election of a Pope, to M. Portalis and M. de Martignac? And, speaking of that, I have seen very great nonsense in the "Constitutionnel," respecting me and Albani. It announces that I have left, and that all Rome is in consternation.

The new Secretary of State is an old man of eighty, with very little *fanaticism on any point;* with whom I am on very good terms, and who concurs with us, precisely because he is accused of being Austrian.

But, to change the subject, what is to become of me? I am hourly expecting a courier. Shall I have a *congé*? Ought I to take advantage of it, or stay here waiting for things to happen? Will they call me? If they call me, can I accept, without conditions with regard to men and things? And, while I wear myself out with conjectures, it is already twelve days since the law has been withdrawn; and it will be twenty-four before this letter reaches you! All will be decided long before. I am wasting my time and yours in these useless discussions. It would be much better to talk to you on subjects unaffected by time and events, and by all the caprices or the fancies of men, — such as I love you, and that your affection is necessary to my happiness. I shall doubtless very soon receive letters from you, either by post or some special courier. Yesterday we had the illumination of the cupola of St. Peter's; to-day the girandole of the Castle of St. Angelo. You see the world goes on its way; and the Tiber continues to flow, in spite of the Ministry, the "Right," and the "Left."

Rome, April 25, 1829.

While I am expecting the special courier that is to decide my course, I am busy about a little fête that I am going to give the Grand Duchess Helena, in the gardens of the Academy. The gardens alone are themselves a fête, and especially at this season. We shall have a dinner, music in the groves, the ladies of the country, an improvisatrice, proverbs, and a balloon. You see that the time will be filled up. After that the curtain falls, I close my door; and either wait for you in my solitude, or go to find you.

I am expecting to-day M. de Blacas, who is going to France. We shall have a quarrel. I will not permit any one to meddle in my affairs; and I am master at Rome. M. de Laval was too good-natured. M. de Blacas wrote letters to me to further the election of Cardinal de Gregorio; and he wishes it to appear that he promoted the election of Cardinal Castiglioni. He would like to see Pius VIII. in private, to have afterward a fine story to tell. I have seen about that.

The post to-day brings nothing from you. A confused letter from Givré, dated the 13th, tells me that on the 16th there was to be a decision upon the interim. I do not believe it, for I should have had already official news of it. Givré is an excellent, worthy fellow; but he instructs me badly, and you instruct me still worse. He has the most confused head in the world: he has always the air of keeping a secret, only half explaining himself, and keeping something back. He seems to

think it will be Rayneval. God grant he may be right! What a good riddance for me! what an admirable opportunity to return for ever into my solitude! Well, let us wait for a word from you in order to live.

Rome, May 5, 1829.

We must all submit to our fate. Yours is always to have one of your friends for Minister. So M. de Laval is appointed.[1] in spite of the feeble denial of the "Messenger" of the 24th of April. If the nomination is not in the "Moniteur," they must be waiting, doubtless, for the return of the courier sent to Vienna. Will M. de Laval accept? That is not the question for me. The choice is very honorable. I hope that M. de Laval will be pleased with it, and get through it well.

Now, I hope that you will see that I was right not to use my *congé* too soon. This impatience, undignified in my position, would not have brought me in any case to Paris, until after the nomination was made. In the eyes of some people I should have had the appearance of an urgent intriguer, and to others of a hoaxed aspirant. Now my course is the simplest, calmest, and noblest in the world,—I will not send in my resignation; I will make no noise: I have a *congé;* I will profit by it to go peaceably to Paris with my wife, when all is over; put my resignation at the feet of the king, explain myself to him, and render him back his gifts, of which, for the glory of his service, I do not think I have made a bad use.

You will understand, that, if I have been displeased with the conduct of my friends in the Chambers, of their little love for the public good, of their temper and quarrelsome spirit, I am admonished on the other hand that I cannot be useful to the Government. They have taken care to intimate to me, that I am judged incapable of serving them, since, after having weighed me for a month in a balance with all kinds of personages,—at the very time when I was succeeding in having a Pontiff elected who was desired by His Majesty,—it was thought necessary to seek for a Minister out of the circle of political probabilities. It was right: I did myself justice, as you know, in not being one of the candidates. However, I probably needed this last lesson to stifle the last remnant of my pride; I receive it in all humility, and will profit by it.

I am still obliged to wait for the arrival of a special courier, that Count Portalis announced to me in one of his recent

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[1] M. de Laval did not accept the portfolio offered him; but he passed from the Embassy of Vienna to that of London the following September

letters. I presented this morning my new letters of credit to His Holiness. As soon as the expected courier arrives, I shall put affairs into the hands of M. Bellocq, and set out for Paris. Perhaps before quitting Italy, I shall show Naples to Mme. de Chateaubriand. The mischief of all this is, that the first year of an Ambassador's establishment is ruinous; and the fêtes I have been obliged to give on account of the Conclave, and the presence of the Grand Duchess, have finished by ruining me. I shall leave Rome to enter a hospital. Unfortunately, my complete edition is sold, my brain empty, and my health impaired; but then I have not much farther to go to reach the end of life, and there is no need of loading too heavily an old vessel, ready to be shipwrecked.

I no longer count upon your letters, as, unfortunately, you doubtless think that I have left. I can scarcely start before a fortnight. All will be forgotten in the happiness of meeting you again, to part no more.

ROME, May 7, 1828.

The journals received this morning publish the ordinance, appointing M. de Montmorency: that cuts the knot still better. I shall give up the trip to Naples, and get ready to leave for Paris. For Paris! That gives you as much pleasure as it does me. I shall see you soon; but Bertin tells me you are ill.

May 7, evening.

I am starting for France. I wrote you this morning by the post, and I have received this evening your few lines by a special courier. A last despatch from Portalis has wounded me, and he receives my reply by M. Siméon, who takes this note. I will be in Paris from the 20th to the 25th; not before, on account of Mme. de Chateaubriand. Please send for Bertin; I cannot reply to his last two letters. Upon my arrival we will talk together. I am going to see you: what signifies all else? Yours, and for ever!

ROME, May 9, 1829.

I took leave of the Pope day before yesterday. I intended starting Tuesday evening, the 12th; but, when there is a wife and servants to take along, things do not proceed very rapidly. The carriages will not be ready Tuesday, and Mme. de Chateaubriand has a violent attack of her troubles. We shall be delayed some days. I wrote to you that I should be in Paris from the 20th to the 25th; but recollect, when you receive this

note, that I have left Rome, and have already got over half the terrible space that has so long separated us!

You think I shall come to an understanding with M. de Laval. I doubt it: I am not disposed to come to an understanding with anybody, being discontented with all the world, and asking only for rest and oblivion. I had the most pacific intentions, and people are trying to seek occasion to quarrel with me. While I had a chance of being Minister, they could not praise or flatter me enough in the despatches; when the place is filled, they dryly announce to me the nomination of M. de Laval, in a despatch both rude and stupid. But, before becoming so insipid and so insolent, from one post to another, they should have considered whom they were addressing, and M. Portalis will have found this out by my two words in reply. It is possible that he signed the despatch without reading it, and that it may be the work of Bourgeot or Rayneval! No matter; I will pay them off.

QUEEN HORTENSE TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

ROME, May 10, 1829.

DEAR MADAME, — I am not willing that one[1] of your friends should leave the place where I am living, and where I have had the pleasure of meeting you, without carrying to you a token of my remembrance. I also wish you to convey to him my sentiments. Kindnesses show themselves in the smallest things, and are also felt by those who are the object of them, without their being equal to the expression of their feelings; but the benevolence which has been able to reach to me has made me regret not being permitted to know him whom I have learned to appreciate, and who in a foreign land so worthily represented to me my country, — at least, such as I should always like to look upon her, — as a friend and protectress.

I am soon to return to my mountains, where I hope to hear from you. Do not forget me entirely: remember that I love you, and that your friendship contributed to soothe one of the keenest sorrows of my life. These are two inseparable memories: thus never doubt my tender love, in again assuring you of which I take sweet pleasure. HORTENSE.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

ROME, May 14, 1829.

Letters from Vienna, received this morning, announce that M. de Laval has refused. If he holds to this first refusal, what

[1] M. de Chateaubriand.

will happen? God only knows. I hope all will be decided before my arrival in Paris. It seems to me that we have fallen into a paralysis, and have only the tongue at liberty. Expect me about the 30th. I intend starting Saturday afternoon, the 16th. This date says every thing to me, since it means seeing you. I will write before leaving on Saturday a last word, by the post.

ROME, May 16, 1829.

This letter will leave Rome a few hours after me, and will arrive a few hours before me in Paris. It closes this correspondence, which has not missed a single courier, and which must form a volume in your hands. The packet of your letters is very small: in tying it up yesterday evening, and seeing how little room it took, my heart misgave me.

I feel a mingling of joy and sadness, which I cannot express to you. For three or four months I was tired of Rome: now I have taken again to these noble ruins, to this profound solitude, — so peaceful, and yet so full of interest, and so rich in memories. Perhaps also the unexpected success I have obtained here has attached me to the place. I arrived here the victim of prejudices excited against me, and I have overcome them all. They seem to be extremely sorry to lose me.

To what am I going to return in France? Noise instead of silence, agitation instead of repose, unreasonableness, ambitious battles for place, and the struggles of vanity. The political system that I have adopted is such as will please no one probably; and, moreover, I shall not even have a chance to carry it out. I would still take it upon myself to give a great glory to France, as I contributed to obtain for her a great liberty; but will they give me free scope? Will they say to me, "Be master, dispose of all, at the peril of your head"? No: they are far from being willing to say such a thing to me; they would take anybody else before me; they would only admit me after having been refused by all the mediocre men in France, and think they were doing me a favor in consigning me to an obscure corner of an obscure Ministry.

Dear friend, I am coming for you, to bring you back with me to Rome. Ambassador or not, it is here that I wish to die with you. I will have at least a great tomb in exchange for a petty life. Still I am going to see you. What happiness!

LYONS, Sunday, 3.30, May 24, 1829.

Notice this date. This is the city where you were born. You see that we are to meet again, and that I am always right.

Hyacinth, whom I am sending on in advance, will hand you this note. Now, shall I carry you back to Rome, or will you keep me in Paris? We will see all about that. To-day I can only talk to you of the happiness of seeing you on Thursday. As for the world at large, if they are expecting me with impatience, I fear much that I shall disappoint them; for I am pleased with nobody. I have some hard truths to say: I shall say them the more easily, as I ask and wish for nothing. My position is good; I have rendered a great service; I have made, in a place where they thought I would be obscure, a difficult and glorious campaign. They wanted to forget me, and that has not been possible. My *congé* — which leaves me absolutely independent, and which was granted to me before M. Portalis was Minister — gives me plenty of time to decide at leisure, and to take whatever course I choose.

On Thursday, at last! My heart beats with joy at the thought of seeing you again in your little room. I have a letter for you from the Queen of Holland. On Thursday! I dare not believe in this word. Only eight days ago I saw the Sabina Mountains, and now those of the Bourbonnais! From the Tiber to the Rhone — to the Rhone, whose waves you brightened with your gaze as a child! On Thursday!

CHAPTER XVIII.

1829–1833.

M. de Chateaubriand's return to Paris. — Letter of Mme. Récamier to Mme. Lenormant. — Reading of "Moses" at the Abbaye-aux-Bois. — Mme. Récamier to Mme. Lenormant. — The Polignac Ministry. — Death of M. Récamier. — Mme. de Chateaubriand to Mme. Récamier. — Mme. Récamier at Dieppe. — The Abbé Lacordaire. — Revolution of July. — Letters of M. de Chateaubriand to Mme. Récamier. — Opposition of M. de Chateaubriand to the new Government. — He leaves for Switzerland — His letters to M. Ballanche. — Cholera. — Mme. Récamier's journey to Switzerland. — She visits Queen Hortense at Arenenberg. — Letter from Queen Hortense. — Letter from M. Ballanche. — Mme. Récamier returns to Paris. — Her family relations. — The Arrest of the Duchess de Berry. — Journey of M. de Chateaubriand to Prague. — His letters. — His journey to Venice. — Second journey to Prague. — His letters.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND arrived in Paris the 27th of May, 1829. He unfolded to Mme. Récamier, in glowing language, a plan of life for their future. In fancy he transported her to Rome, along with M. Ballanche, M. Ampère, and all the colony of Abbaye-aux-Bois; and established them in the Palace Caffarelli, which had charmed him. Mme. Récamier listened to these plans without believing in them; but this dream pleased her imagination, and the worthy Ballanche allowed himself to enjoy it also. Under the influence of these impressions, she wrote to her niece, who was at Toulon, waiting for a vessel to join her husband in Greece: —

MME. RÉCAMIER TO MME. LENORMANT.

June 1, 1829.

You know all the details of the Abbaye, *chère petite*. M. Ballanche, Paul, and M. Récamier have written long letters to you. M. de Chateaubriand arrived here on Thursday: I have been happy in meeting him again, — happier, indeed, than I thought I should be. The only thing wanting to this happiness is to know that you are contented. Your loneliness weighs upon me. I cannot give you advice, on account of the uncer-

tainty of my own plans. If M. de Chateaubriand returns to Rome, it is probable that I shall pass the winter there. My health may force me to go to Dieppe this summer for sea-bathing. But, before that, your fate will be decided.

This morning I am expecting M. de Chateaubriand, who has an audience with the king, and is coming to give me the particulars of the interview. I see quite a number of people,—M. Villemain, whom I find very agreeable, M. de Sainte-Aulaire, &c. But it is M. de Chateaubriand's arrival that gives new zest to my life, which seemed to be wearing out. My own feelings, that are still so young, make me better able to understand yours; consequently, I can sympathize the more readily with you, and it is in me that your poor heart ought fully to confide

The king received M. de Chateaubriand very graciously; but he asked him if he was thinking of returning soon to Rome. The interim in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs still went on; and it was evident, that the king would not dispose of this place except by making an entire change in the Cabinet. But it was also clear, that M. de Chateaubriand would not be called upon to co-operate in the formation of a new Ministry. While waiting to make up his mind what course to pursue, he went to the Pyrenees for his health.

Before his departure, Mme. Récamier, who knew with what regret he had given up the representation of his tragedy of "Moses," arranged, as a sort of compensation, a reading of the play. A most brilliant company was invited, who accepted with eagerness so coveted an invitation. Lafond, of the Comédie Française, was to read; and received, two days beforehand, the manuscript, which he was desired to study. In spite of his Gascon accent, he acquitted himself very creditably in the first act, and it was hoped that all would go on well to the end. But Lafond had not looked at the rest of the play: he stammered and hesitated over the second act, became annoyed, and said that the manuscript was bad. The audience was impatient, and Mme. Récamier in despair; but M. de Chateaubriand entirely concealed his annoyance. With a great deal of tact, suavity, and coolness, he excused Lafond; and, throwing the blame on the manuscript, took it, and read the last two acts himself.

M. BALLANCHE TO MME. LENORMANT.

June 28, 1829.

Yesterday there was a brilliant assembly at the Abbaye-aux-Bois, to hear "Moses" read. Lafond read very badly, because the manuscript was poor; but M. de Chateaubriand took it, and read it himself: so what was lost in the reading was amply made up in the interest. Your aunt, however, was on thorns; but be assured that all went off very well, and every one was delighted, as it was natural they should be. Among the auditors, I shall confine myself to mentioning Mesdames Appony, de Fontanes, and Gay; MM. Cousin, Villemain, Lebrun, Lamartine, Latouche, Dubois, Saint-Marc-Girardin, Valery, Mérimée, Gérard, the Dukes de Doudeauville and de Broglie, MM. de Sainte-Aulaire, de Barante, and David, Mme. de Boigne, Mme. de Gramont, Baron Pasquier, Mme. and the Mlles. de Barante, and Mlle. de Sainte-Aulaire, Dugas-Montbel, &c. I ought to have had the complete list immediately made out to give you, for it was very distinguished. M. de Chateaubriand was in his best mood. He manifested no annoyance when his beautiful verses were sometimes murdered, and he was very obliging in reading some passages, besides a whole act. He received, as you may imagine, a great many well-merited compliments. . . .

The season having arrived, Mme. Récamier, with M. Ballanche, left for Dieppe, and M. de Chateaubriand went to Cauterets.

MME. RÉCAMIER TO MME. LENORMANT.

Dieppe, Aug. 16, 1829.

You are still alone, my poor child; but it is only for a short time. I have written to your husband, enclosing him a letter that I received from the Duke de Rochefoucauld: he will surely be pleased with it, and we are coming to some sort of a decision. A new Ministry is talked about: it is to be completely ultra. In that case, M. de Chateaubriand would resign, I think; and it is possible that this event may also cause M. Lenormant's request to miscarry. Such is what we have to fear; and this unlucky chance would bring us all together again at Paris. If I did not apprehend danger, or at least an alarming tendency, in this movement for France, I could scarcely help rejoicing at it. However, a few days more, and we shall know our fate.

I am here in the midst of fêtes, princesses, illuminations, spectacles: two of my windows face the ballroom, and the other two the theatre. In the midst of all this bustle, I am in perfect

solitude: I sit on the sea-shore, and dream; review all the sad and happy events in my life. I trust that you will be happier than I have been!

I am deeply touched by your tenderness for me, when it would be so natural for you to be absorbed by another feeling. Your image mingles with all my reveries: it is through you that I have a future. If you make the journey,[1] we will resign ourselves to it, by thinking of the influence it may have on the career of M. Lenormant. If we do not succeed, resignation will seem to me the more easy, and we shall all be together again in a few weeks.

I have met Léonie de B. here: she thought that you had married an old *savant*, a pedant. Imagine my pleasure in telling her that this old *savant* was twenty-five years old, and a very agreeable man. I think that poor Léonie is tired of remaining single. Her mother is very attentive to me. I also see Mme. Anisson,[2] who is particularly polite to me, and who pleases me on her own account as well as on her brother's; but I pass almost all my time reading and talking with M. Ballanche, who adapts himself perfectly to our solitude. He is lodged in a sort of tower, where he has a view of the sea. He is working on his "Paligenesia," and seems the most contented person in the world.

Poor Ampère has left for Lyons. The health of his father, who has been ordered his native air, causes him great anxiety. He is to return at the end of the month. It is very touching, his care for his father: he accompanied me, when I started for Dieppe, as far as the first stopping-place for the night. As I travelled alone and by short stages, we arrived very early, took a walk, had supper, some reading; after which he left me to rejoin his father. He travelled by night, in a miserable conveyance; but he was delighted with our little trip, which was a diversion for him in the midst of all his vexations.

How many particulars I have given you! but I think that you are at leisure: if M. Lenormant were with you, I would not write to you so much at length. I rely upon your skill in deciphering my scrawl. Yours, with love and kisses.

Upon the formation of the Polignac Ministry, M. de Chateaubriand, who comprehended instantly all its consequences, returned to Paris, and sought an interview with the king, in order to speak to him of the dangers that might

[1] M. Lenormant asked permission to return to Greece, and his wife was to accompany him.

[2] Sister of M. de Barante.

accrue to France and to himself from the unpopularity of the new Ministers. He was not admitted; and gave in his resignation, as Mme. Récamier had foreseen.

As M. Lenormant could expect no favors from the new Administration, he gave up the idea of even asking permission to remain longer in Greece; and Mme Récamier, during the winter 1829–30, had again all her friends around her.

But M. Récamier, in spite of his strong constitution, was now beginning to feel the weight of years. Since the death of his father-in-law, he had lived with his niece, Mme. Lenormant, and dined with the whole family every day at the Abbaye-aux-Bois. He still retained his perfect benevolence of character, goodness of heart, and careless disposition. His habits of life underwent no change; and, though he was almost eighty years old, he continued to pass all his evenings abroad. He spent his mornings in the Chaussée d'Antin, his old business quarter, where he had a sort of office, in which he received his old and new friends, whom, in spite of his reverses, he still found means to oblige and serve.

On being seized, in April, with inflammation of the chest, to which he was subject, he expressed a wish to be removed to the Abbaye-aux-Bois, flattering himself that he could breathe more freely there. His wish was gratified, and his wife's salon was given up to him. There he died, on the 19th of April, 1830, receiving every attention, and retaining his serenity to the last.

It would be difficult to find two persons more unlike in tastes, temperament, mind, and character than M. and Mme. Récamier. They had but one quality in common, — that of good-nature; and yet, in the singular tie that bound them together for thirty-seven years, there had never been the slightest interruption of their kindly relations. In losing her husband, Mme. Récamier felt she had lost a second father. Under these sad circumstances, she received from Mme. de Chateaubriand the following note: —

22d April, 1830.

I am very sorry to know that you are unhappy. Pray, inform me, through M. de Chateaubriand, when you would like to

receive me, and I will come to you at once. When my friends are in trouble, I do not like to abandon them; and I hope that you will not doubt my tender feelings for you. I myself feel to-day how very sincere they are.

The summer after her husband's death, Mme. Récamier went again to Dieppe for her health. Here she met the Abbé Lacordaire, who was then considered a young man of promise, though not yet distinguished for his eloquence. He had a fine, noble figure, and was full of faith and enthusiasm. His style of conversation was perfectly free, often paradoxical, always brilliant, and remarkable for grace and gayety. He was very much liked by Mme. Récamier and all her friends.

M. de Chateaubriand joined his friend on the seashore; but he had only been there a few hours, when the news of the fatal Ordinances,[1] promulgated the very day he left Paris, was announced to him by M. de Boissy. He returned immediately to the capital; and, a few hours afterward, Mme. Récamier also set out, as she was anxious about her friends, especially her niece, from whom she was separated, and, like M. de Chateaubriand, convinced that a terrible outbreak, a revolution perhaps, was imminent.

She arrived in Paris on the 30th, and was obliged to leave her carriage at La Chapelle St. Denis, and traverse all the distance from there to the Abbaye-aux-Bois on foot, with M. Ampère and her maid. The barricades at the corners of all the streets rendered the transit still more fatiguing.

Not knowing that she had left Dieppe, M. de Chateaubriand wrote to her to that city. As the letter is given in his memoirs, I shall only insert an extract: —

Thursday morning, July 29, 1830.

I write without knowing whether my letter will reach you, as the mails are stopped. I came into Paris in the midst of cannonading, discharge of musketry, and with the tocsin sounding. This morning, the tocsin is still sounding; but I do not hear any firing: the people, it appears, are organizing, and resistance will continue until the Ordinances are revoked. This

[1] The Ordinances that caused the French Revolution of 1830. — Ed.

will be the immediate result, without speaking of the definitive result, — the perjury to which the Ministers, at least to all appearances, have made the Crown amenable.

The National Guard, the Polytechnic School, — all are concerned in it. You can judge in what state I found Mme. de Chateaubriand. Persons who, like her, have witnessed the 10th of August and the 2d of September, are easily terrified. A regiment of the line, the Fifth, has already passed over to the side of the Charter. Certainly, M. de Polignac is very guilty; his incapacity is a poor excuse: ambition in a man who has no talents is a crime. It is said that the Court is at St. Cloud, and ready to leave.

I do not speak to you of myself; my position is painful, but clear. I will not betray either the king or the Charter, neither legitimate power nor liberty. I have nothing to say or do, but to wait, and weep for my country.

Noon.

The firing is beginning again; it seems that they are attacking the Louvre, where the king's troops have intrenched themselves. The faubourg[1] in which I live is beginning to rise. A Provisional Government is talked of, of whom the chiefs are to be General Gérard, the Duke de Choiseul, and M. de Lafayette. It is probable that this letter will not go, Paris having been declared in a state of siege. Marshal Marmont commands for the king: it is said that he is killed, but I do not believe it. Try not to worry. May God protect you! We shall meet again.

Friday.

This letter was written yesterday, but could not be forwarded. All is over: the popular victory is complete: the king yields on all points; but I fear that things have gone far beyond concessions from the Crown. I wrote this morning to His Majesty. I have also a complete plan of sacrifices laid out for my future course, which pleases me: we will talk it over when you come. I am going to put this letter in the post myself, and take a look at Paris.

Apprised of Mme. Récamier's return to the Abbaye-aux-Bois, and the unusual fatigues of her journey, M. de Chateaubriand wrote to her: —

July 31, 1830.

I had just written to your niece that you would arrive at the *most unexpected moment:* you see how well I know you. I was *carried yesterday in triumph through the streets:* I do not dare

[1] Rue d'Enfer.

go out to-day. Come, therefore, when you are rested. Unfortunately, one can only move on foot. I have the most important things to say to you. I hope that I am going to play a part worthy of you and of myself, but which may perhaps cost me my life. You will understand what I have to endure from Mme. de Chateaubriand's terrors. Sleep, and come to me when you are entirely rested.

The fall of the elder branch of the Bourbons condemned to private life M. de Chateaubriand and the greater number of Mme. Récamier's friends: it overturned the edifice, in the building of which they had co-operated with patriotism and devotion. Therefore the Revolution appeared to both them and Mme. Récamier a sad and fatal event; but they still hoped that it would result in happiness and rest to France. Ballanche, so enthusiastic in his dreams of moral perfection, so sincere in his desire to see an alliance brought about between the old and the new regime, could not see the hope for whose accomplishment he had labored in his various political writings vanish without chagrin. In a letter written at this epoch, he says: —

"As to me, my thesis merits its fate. I have renounced one of my ideas, the most absorbing one of my life. I believed in the possibility of progress by the way of *evolution;* but I see plainly now that this is not so in human things, and that they proceed by the way of *revolution.* Thus cataclysms cannot be avoided in the social any more than in the political world."

The younger part of the society of the Abbaye-aux-Bois did not look upon the Revolution from the same point of view. M. Ampère, a friend of Carrel, and connected with MM. Thiers and Mignet, had wholly adopted principles, then reputed the most liberal. M. Lenormant — who had worked for the "Globe," but whose opinions were more exactly represented by the "Revue Française," which had never systematically opposed the Bourbons — was moreover united by affection and admiration to M. Guizot. Mme. Récamier, with her usual impartiality, was the arbiter and link between these opposite parties.

We know what noble language M. de Chateaubriand held in the Chamber of Peers; and, now that the violences

and party ambitions of the period are things of the past, it must be confessed that he was right. He pleaded eloquently for the disregarded rights of the young Henri, and, resigning all his titles, honors, and pensions, published his pamphlet, "The Restoration and the Elective Monarchy:" then he left for Switzerland with Mme. de Chateaubriand.

His letters to Mme. Récamier, during his sojourn in Switzerland, are published in the tenth volume of the "Memoires d'Outre Tombe." I have compared these letters with the originals; and, finding them this time faithfully copied, have inserted them here:—

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO M. BALLANCHE.

GENEVA, July 12, 1831.

Ennui, my dear old friend, produces an intermittent fever: sometimes it benumbs my fingers and my ideas, and sometimes it makes me write like the Abbé Trublet. Thus I overwhelm Mme. Récamier with letters, and leave yours without reply. So you see, the elections, as I have always foreseen and predicted, have gone in favor of the *bourgeois* class. France now is all for that party, even the enthusiastic young people. Great good may it do them! Our poor nation, my dear friend, is always for power: whoever reigns, carries the day; yesterday Charles X., to-day Philippe, to-morrow Peter, and always well, *sempre bene*, and oaths to their liking, and commemorations for all the glorious days of all the *régimes*, from the *Sans-culottides* to the 27th, 28th, and 29th of July. One thing only astonishes me,—the want of honor of the day. I never could have imagined, that young France would be pleased with peace at any price, and that they would not throw out of the window the Ministers who bestowed upon them an English Commissioner at Brussels, and Austrian Corporal at Boulogne. But it appears that all these smart contemners of old fogies, these future great men, have only ink, instead of blood, under their nails. But let us drop the subject.

Friendship has its cajoleries, like a more tender sentiment: the older it is, the more flattering,—precisely the opposite of the other sentiment. You say charming things to me about my *glory*. You know that I would like to believe them; but at heart I do not, and there is my trouble: for, if I once could persuade myself that I am a *chef d'œuvre* of nature, I should pass my last days in self-contemplation. Like bears, who live on their fat during the winter through licking their paws, I would live on self-admiration during the winter of my life; I would lick

myself, and have the finest skin in the world. Unfortunately, I am only a poor, lean bear, and on all my skin I have not enough fat upon which to make a slight repast.

I will say to you, in taking my turn in the way of compliment, that your book has at last reached me, after having made the complete tour of all the Cantons in the pocket of your courier. I like prodigiously your centuries passing by in the time that "the bells of the clock took to play the air of the Ave Maria."[1]

All your exposition is magnificent. Never have you developed your system with more clearness and grandeur. In my opinion, your "Vision d'Hébal" is your most noble and profound work. You have really made me comprehend, that to him who understands the idea of eternity every thing is contemporaneous. You have explained to me God before the existence of man, the intellectual creation of the latter, then his union with matter by his fall, when he thought he would take his destiny into his own hands.

My old friend, I envy you: you can very well do without this world, which I cannot manage. Contemporary of the past and the future, you laugh at the present, that weighs me down, — miserable me, who crouch under my ideas and my years. Patience! I shall very soon be delivered from the last; and will the first follow me into the tomb? Without exaggeration, I should be sorry not to be able to remember you.

Yours sincerely, CHATEAUBRIAND.

July 31, 1831.

Your letter, my dear and old friend, both relieved me from anxiety, and gave me fresh cause for it. I have not ceased to

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[1] "Hébal" was the chief of a Scottish clan, gifted with second sight, and devoted from his youth up to metaphysical speculations. One day, when absorbed in vague contemplations of the universe, man and conscience, mind and matter, his eyes rested on a clock with three hands, whose relative motion he regarded attentively. He compared this little clock, the work of man, with the grand clock of the universe, whose phases, established by the Eternal Geometer, have an invariable harmony. This clock played at every hour a strain of music adapted to the words of the Ave Maria. While listening to it, the external world seemed to disappear. "Hébal's" thought, disengaged from all influences that could check or mark its flight, found no longer any limit in time or space. All the magnetic visions of his childhood came thronging into his mind, and classed and grouped themselves with the rapidity of lightning. The result was a magnificent ideal epic of the history of all the ages, at once, successive and spontaneous, and passing through his mind while "the bells of the clock were playing the Ave Maria." — *Œuvres de Ballanche*, t. iii. — ED.

write letter after letter to the Abbaye-aux-Bois to ask the reason of this silence. This time I am not writing directly to our excellent friend; but say to her from me, that I count upon rejoining her at Paris from the 15th to the 20th of this month, to come to an understanding with her, and sell my house. Her illness will make me hasten my journey. I shall leave here as soon as Mme. de Chateaubriand's health—who is also very unwell at present—will permit. I will take care to acquaint you with the day and hour. How many trials to undergo! But, if we ever meet again, they will be over, and we will part no more.

I embrace you. Mme. Lenormant must have been very much distressed. What if all these rheumatic attacks had fallen upon me!

Do not fail to write to me.

Aug. 3, 1831.

God bless you for your good news, my dear friend. Our friend wished to write to me. I beg her to do nothing of the sort; I will soon be in Paris. But you must write me from time to time: I cannot yet fix the day of my departure, Mme. de Chateaubriand being ill; but I will let you know. Now I am happy, and much more so than if it were myself who was restored to life. I embrace you tenderly and cordially.

CHATEAUBRIAND.

Mme. Salvage has arrived: I received her as well as I was able.

The following year, 1832, Paris was visited by the cholera. The Faubourg St. Germain and the Rue de Sèvres, in particular, was one of the quarters most ravaged by the epidemic. By a presentiment only too well justified by her death, Mme. Récamier, who had met danger firmly, and who was lavish in her care of persons attacked by contagious diseases, had an invincible and almost superstitious terror of the cholera. She at once left the Abbaye-aux-Bois, and established herself with Mme. Salvage in the Rue de La Paix. All this part of the city, by an inexplicable caprice of the mysterious scourge, had been spared much more than the left bank of the Seine.

In August, Mme. Récamier decided to make a trip to Switzerland, where she was to meet M. de Chateaubriand,

who was already wandering in the mountains. She went to Constance with Mme. Salvage.

The Château d'Arenenberg, where the Duchess de St. Leu passed her summers, and which she had bought and put in order, overlooks Lake Constance. It was impossible for Mme. Récamier not to give a few days to this kind and amiable person, especially in her forlorn and isolated position. The duchess too had lost, the year previous, her eldest son, Napoleon, who died of smallpox in Italy.

When M. de Chateaubriand joined Mme. Récamier at Constance, he was invited to dine with her at the castle. Hortense received him with the most gracious kindness, and read to him some extracts from her own memoirs. The establishment at Arenenberg was elegant, and on a large though not ostentatious scale. Hortense's manners in her own house were simple and affectionate. She talked too much, perhaps, about her taste for a life of retirement, love of nature, and aversion to greatness, to be wholly believed. After all these protestations, her visitors could not perceive without surprise the care the duchess and her household took to treat Prince Louis like a sovereign. He had precedence of every one.

The prince, polite, accomplished, and taciturn, appeared to Mme. Récamier to be a very different person from his elder brother, whom she had known in Rome, young, generous, and enthusiastic. The prince sketched for her in Sepia a view of Lake Constance, overlooked by the chateau of Arenenberg. In the foreground a shepherd, leaning against a tree, is watching his flock, and playing on the flute.

This design, pleasantly associated with Mme. Récamier's visit, is now historically interesting. For the last ten years, the signature of the author has been affixed to very different things.

At the end of 1833, the Duchess de St. Leu decided to publish, under the title of "Queen Hortense in Italy, France, and England, during the year 1831," a portion of her memoirs. While she was occupied in looking over the proofs, she wrote to Mme. Récamier: —

Oct. 27, 1833.

"I cannot permit our common friend[1] to leave without speaking to you of my friendship, and of the pleasure I should have in seeing you here again. I hope, that, if you do come to Switzerland, it will be directly to my house. Mme. Salvage will tell you that I have come to the great resolution of publishing my melancholy journey in France. I wrote it this winter for myself alone. My friends, to whom I have read it, force me to make it public: I have yielded, not without reluctance; for I have told you how I feel when I admit the whole world into my confidence. It seems to me that I am robbing those I love, whom I distinguish by a confidence that ought not to be lavished upon every one. It also takes from the pleasure of "asides."

I feel beforehand so great an embarrassment about this publication, that I am quite like a person who should, without thinking herself positively deformed, decide to show herself divested of all clothing. You will confess that it requires courage, because the position is awkward. But, now I have said Yes, I must bear all the inconveniences attached to the title of author. I have compromised nothing, however, and I am putting myself in danger of being unfavorably criticised. But, not by you, I am very sure: on the contrary, it is sweet to me to think that you will understand me, and that you will take an interest in the troubles with which you are already acquainted.

Thanks to you, your friends will be indulgent: this thought already somewhat re-assures me. Speak to them about me, I beg of you, and believe me yours tenderly. HORTENSE.

During this visit to Switzerland, Mme. Récamier received from M. Ballanche, who had remained in Paris with M. and Mme. Lenormant, the following letter: —

Aug. 18, 1832.

The clock is striking eleven, and I have not yet heard from you: to-morrow, I shall begin to be uneasy. Mme. Lenormant wrote to you yesterday, and gave you all the family news. As for me, I continue to mend; I am beginning to walk, but I do not wish to try my strength too far.

I saw M. Latouche yesterday: we talked a great deal about you, and also of M. de Chateaubriand. He spoke of how much better it would be, if M. de Chateaubriand, sure of his fame, would accept it purely and simply. He thinks that Paris

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[1] Mme. Salvage.

is still the best of retreats; and that here he is in his proper place, and a great deal better situated than he could be anywhere else. Then he would be left free to devote his time to carving in silence the last monument he is preparing, &c.

He wishes, and in this I think he is joined by many others, that you and M. de Chateaubriand should be in Paris this winter, — he working at his memoirs; you conciliating all parties, and making every thing pleasant.

The poem of Sigour[1] is in the "Revue des Deux Mondes." I am very curious to know what effect it has upon people who are not yet acquainted with the poem.

An article on "The Man without a Name" has just appeared in the "Quotidienne." The most remarkable thing said about it is, that I am not of a nature to be comprehended by a great many people. They put the author of "Antigone," "Orpheus," and "The Man without a Name," before M. Cousin.

Yesterday I passed the evening at M. and Mme. Lenormant's with Ampère. We talked about you, and formed kind wishes for your return. But do not leave us without news of you.

We were troubled at not hearing from you, until the arrival of your letter to me just received. Many, many thanks. We are the more grateful, as we know what a trouble it is for you to write, and that to do so is a piece of devotion on your part. I consider myself very fortunate in being the first to hear from you.

You are entirely too good to concern yourself about my confinement. That is not the painful thing; it is having you so far away. But all this complication of exile will end at last; and we shall all be together again in that Abbaye which is the centre of the world, as they used to say, you know, about the temple of Delphos.

After her visit to Lake Constance, Mme. Récamier went with M. de Chateaubriand to Geneva: she made a sad and pious pilgrimage to the chateau of Coppet, and the tomb of Mme. de Staël;[2] and returned to Paris in October. M. and Mme. de Chateaubriand, still undecided whether they would abandon France, or come back to their home in the Rue d'Enfer, remained at Geneva.

During this autumn of 1832, M. Lenormant was made, through M. Guizot, Assistant Keeper of the Cabinet of

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[1] By M. Ampère.

[2] An interesting account of this visit to Coppet is given in the tenth volume of "Les Memoires d'Outre Tombe," p. 167. — Ed.

Medals in the Royal Library; and he therefore took possession of the rooms appropriated for the purpose, in the library buildings. The position was an advantage; but it involved a sacrifice deeply felt on both sides. It separated Mme. Récamier from her niece, and broke up those pleasant habits which the marriage of the latter had not interrupted: Mme. Récamier was, however, the first to advise the removal. But from this time, as a sort of compensation, the two families spent the summer together, either in the environs of Paris, at some residence hired by Mme. Récamier; or in Normandy, on a small estate owned by M. Lenormant.

If Mme. Récamier's intercourse with strangers was marked by an unrivalled grace and kindliness, her domestic relations were far more so. The charm of her character, the playfulness of her wit, the evenness of her temper, and her constant desire to please, gave her absolute empire over her family. With an extreme ease of manner, she had a horror of familiarity: her politeness never forsook her, even with her servants. She was both perfectly discreet and perfectly sincere, very indulgent but very firm; and, when an important interest, a sentiment of justice or of duty, forced her to depart from her usual mildness, no one knew how to give a rebuke in a more direct or spirited manner. As a friend she was incomparable. The integrity of her character, added to her great discretion, gave to intercourse with her a delightful feeling of security. Consulted in the most important, and often in the most delicate affairs, her advice was always marked by moderation and good judgment. Irresolute sometimes in regard to trifles, she was prompt and singularly decided on great occasions.

The uncertainty of M. de Chateaubriand's future, and the natural grief that he felt at surviving the order of things to which he had devoted his entire life and all the powers of his genius, weighed heavily upon Mme. Récamier. M. Ballanche, who was the confidant of her inquietudes, wrote to her:—

"If M. de Chateaubriand could take things in general by rising above them, I think that he would be much more

useful to himself and others. I persist in thinking that he ought to put himself at the service of ideas, not of things. I consider it very proper that M. de Chateaubriand should resign his part in action, but wrong that he should give up his part in speculation."

But M. de Chateaubriand was essentially a man of action, and an unexpected event very soon brought him forward again. He was still in Geneva, when he heard of the arrest of Madame the Duchess de Berry. This news decided him: he hastened to Paris, and solicited from the Ministers the right of being one of the defenders of the captive princess. As he was not allowed to defend a woman whom they did not wish to try, but hoped to dishonor, he published his "Memorial on the Captivity of Madame the Duchess de Berry." This pamphlet cost M. de Chateaubriand a lawsuit; but the jury rendered a verdict of acquittal. After coming out of Blaye, the Duchess de Berry wrote to M. de Chateaubriand to ask him to go in her name to Prague, see her children, and announce her marriage with Count Lucchesi Palli to the King Charles X. He could not refuse the mission entrusted to him by an unfortunate woman, and left for Bohemia the 14th of May.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

May 14, 1833.

Do not fail to write to me at every stopping-place; and then, if you make careful inquiries, you will find that there are bankers who will get your letters carried by their correspondents.

Say to Mme. de Boigne, that I have started with the most *pacific* ideas, wishing to prevent all petty intrigues, and arrive, if it be possible, at some final arrangements for the future; provided the middle men do not attack me, and show themselves my personal enemies.

When it is known that I have left, let the journals say concisely, and without comment, that I have gone to Prague, charged with a mission by the Duchess de Berry. See well to that.

How unhappy I am in leaving you! But I will soon return, and will write you from the Fall of the Rhine. Yours for life!

BASLE, May 17, 1833.

Here I am at Basle without accident. You were here last year. You watched the flow of this beautiful river, that was so soon to carry you to France, away from me.

Journeys always give me strength, thought, and sentiment: I am in a good mood for writing the new prologue of a book. On the way, I read Pellico[1] all through. I am delighted with the book: its saintliness will prevent its being liked by our Revolutionists, free after the fashion of Fouché. Were you not delighted with the *Zanze sotto i Piombi*, and the little deaf mute, and the old jailor Schiller, and the religious conversations by the window, and our poor Maroncelli, and that poor young wife of the superintendent who died so sweetly, and the return into beautiful Italy?

Pellico had visions: I think that the devil must have shown him some pages of my memoirs. Moreover, his genius is scarcely Italian, and he speaks a different language from that of the old classics of Italy. I could scarcely get over his Gallicisms, — his *chi che si fosse*, his disagreeable *parecchi*, &c. But, dear me! what am I talking about? and what has it to do with the end of my journey? It is this confounded Rhine, that has seen Cæsar, and is laughing to see me running after empires.

Do not forget me, nor fail to remember me to my friends, and especially M. Ampère. I will write, but I cannot say where. I do not know which route I am to take.

SCHAFFHAUSEN, Saturday, 18.

I have just seen the Fall of the Rhine on your account. I could only look at it for a moment, give a thought to you, and depart. I have not gone to bed a single night. I shall arrive at my destination Sunday the 20th. I did not expect to arrive before the 24th: it is four days gained toward my return. Mme. de Sainte-Aulaire[2] passed by here yesterday; we are not going to the same king. Do not forget to remember me to all the friends of the little chamber.

WALDMÜNCHEN, May 22, 1833.

I have been stopped here, fifty leagues from the end of my journey, for want of horses. I have lost twenty-four hours,

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1 "Le Mie Prigioni."
2 Wife of the French Ambassador at the Court of Vienna.

which have been useful to me, as far as taking rest was concerned: I was worn out with fatigue and want of sleep. I can only write you a few words on the way. One thing is certain, I do not wish to leave my friends again: I have had enough, and too much, of journeys. I dream only of seeing you again: I count the hours. I shall see you very soon, I hope. But when shall I hear from you? How long the time is!

Remember me to the little society of the Abbaye.

PRAGUE, May 27.

On Wednesday, I start for Carlsbad. I am wanted at Vienna; but I have such a longing to see you and France, that I do not know whether I shall make that journey, which would delay me ten days. In any case, I hope not to exceed my month. I must not leave you again.

Mme. Récamier passed the summer of 1833 at Passy, where M. de Chateaubriand found the whole society of the Abbaye-aux-Bois re-united; but he himself was obliged to leave immediately, called into Italy by the royal client who had placed her cause in his faithful hands.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

PARIS, Monday eve, Sept. 2, 1833.

As I shall not be able to see you to-morrow morning, I write this evening to say farewell. I am much less stout-hearted than in the last journey, though I shall travel under a more beautiful sky. I leave you ill; and I have not courage against that. Mme. de Chateaubriand also is not well: every thing, in fact, troubles me. I re-assure myself by thinking, that, before a month passes away, I shall be back.

I will write to you; I will send you notes. But it is a great misfortune always to live thus in the future, when there remains so little of the present.

What distresses me still more is, that I shall be so long without hearing from you. Run the risk of sending me a few words, to be left until called for, at Venice and Milan. If I can do nothing more, I will have them called for.

Love me a little: think of me. You know that it is all my life and all my protection.

SAINT-MARC, near DIJON, Sept. 4, 1833.

The hamlet where I have stopped to dine is lonely: I have a fine view of the setting sun, across a somewhat dreary country.

To-day, the 4th of September, is my birthday; and not the 4th of October. It is a great many years ago. I dedicate to you the first pulsation of my heart: there is no doubt it was for you, though you were not yet born.

I would like to write a longer letter; but the pavement on this road has affected my head, and I suffer. Be tranquil: I will return very soon, and all will be finished.

I will drop this letter to-night into the post at Dijon. I shall be at Lausanne the day after to-morrow (Friday), and at Milan on Sunday.

DOMO D'OSSOLA, Saturday eve, Sept. 7.

I wish to salute you in setting foot on beautiful Italy. The day after to-morrow, I shall be in Venice. I have had frightful weather, and it is still raining in torrents. I dream only of seeing you again. As for details, do not look for them: I am overcome with sleep and lassitude. By the rapidity of my journey, you will see that I have not been to bed. I have, however, taken some notes; and I had in the Jura, and afterward on the Simplon, a gust of wind that I would not have missed for a hundred crowns. I will write to you from Venice, — that Venice whence I embarked, an age ago, for Jerusalem. Think of me; and get well, so as to walk with me in the Bois de Boulogne.

VENICE, Sept. 10, 1833.

I wish so much that you were here! The sun, that I had not seen since I left Paris, is just shining out. I lodge at the entrance of the Grand Canal, with the sea both at the horizon and under my window. My fatigue is extreme: yet I cannot help admiring this sad and beautiful spectacle of a city so charming and so forlorn, and of a sea almost without a vessel. And then the twenty-six years gone by, counting from the day that I left Venice to embark at Trieste for Greece and Jerusalem! If I had not known you for the last twenty-five years, I should say rude things of the century. I have found no instructions here: the people are very kind, but very stupid. I shall be obliged to await replies from Florence. I have, therefore, eight days in which to explore Venice; I shall put them to profit, and on St. Francis' Day I will describe to you what I have seen. Yours, with all the sweetness of this climate, so different from that of the Gauls!

I have not yet left my inn. The people have been praying for the cessation of the rain. It has ceased on my arrival: it is a good sign.

VENICE, Sept. 12, 1833.

I spent a very pleasant day yesterday, if there can be pleasant days without you. I visited the Ducal Palace, and saw the palaces on the Grand Canal again. What poor devils we are, in regard to art, after all this! I have all sorts of projects in my head. I am taking notes: it is on this account that I do not give you any particulars, not wishing to repeat myself.

Le Valery[1] is a very good guide; but, when we are at the places, we perceive that he has made us see nothing. Besides, my memory has been so faithful, that, after twenty-six years, I have not been mistaken in a step, or in a judgment on a monument. I understand that Lord Byron would have liked to pass long years here. I also would willingly end my days here, if you would come. Mme. de Chateaubriand likes Venice.

I am still waiting for tidings.[2] I have indirect news, which makes me hope that I have arrived in time. In a few days, I shall be enlightened in regard to my fate, when I turn again in your direction.

To-day, I am going to continue my sight-seeing. I long to see the "Assumption" of Titian. We see his masterpieces here on every side: his atmosphere is so perfect, that, if one looks at one of his pictures and then at the sky, they cannot be distinguished from each other. I have seen the Librarians Betti and Gamba. I do not know whether Count Cigonara is here. The "Venice Gazette" having announced my arrival, I am expecting to make some new acquaintances.

Have you returned to your woods? and are you on your *two feet*?[3] I am devoured here by those same creatures which have only stung you. Hyacinth is almost blind. Good-bye for the present. I lay at your feet the most beautiful morning in the world, whose light is gleaming across the paper on which I am writing.

Do not forget to remember me to all our friends.

VENICE, Sept. 15, 1833.

I received yesterday yours of the 5th. Many, many thanks. It would have given me still more pleasure, had it not told me that you were suffering. I cannot understand this continuation of trouble from so slight an accident. I hope by this time, however, that you are cured, and gone back perhaps to your woods.[4]

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[1] "Tour of Italy," 5 vols. [2] From the Duchess de Berry.
[3] She had been lame several weeks, from an accident.
[4] Bois de Boulogne.

I have written often, and quite long letters. I told you that the notes I was taking prevented me from entering into particulars. I run about everywhere; I go into society: what do you say to that? I pass my evenings with ladies: what do you say to that? I wish to see every thing, — know every thing. They treat me wonderfully well; they tell me that I am *quite young;* and they are amazed at my fictions about my gray hairs. Think how proud I am! and how I believe in all these compliments! Vanity is so silly! My secret is that I did not wish to keep up my reserve here, when I heard of Lord Byron's. I did not wish to be considered the copy of a man of whom I was the original. I have turned myself again into an ambassador. I have explored Venice differently from those who have come before me. I have only sought after those things which travellers, following in each other's footsteps, do not seek after. No one, for example, speaks of the Cemetery of Venice; no one has marked the tombs of the Jews at Lido; no one has studied the habits of the gondoliers, &c. You will see all this.

I am still without news.[1] I expect it by the 18th or 19th. Whatever happens, I have done my duty. St. Francis' Day will see me back with you.

Remember me kindly to all friends. Always and ever yours.

FERRARA, Sept. 18, 1833.

I have made a trip for the purpose of falling in with the poor traveller.[2] I arrived last night; and I return this evening to Venice, whence I start finally to come back to you. You see that I have scarcely time to write to you a word, to acquaint you with my movements, and tell you that everywhere I think of you. This is the scene of the loves, folly, and imprisonment of your poet. Pray for me. Perhaps I may get a few lines from you before leaving Venice, to which place I wish they would exile me, along with you.

Thursday, 19th.

All is changed. They absolutely desire that I should go to the very end of the journey, where they dare not arrive without me. All my resistance has been useless; I must resign myself. I am therefore leaving. This will prolong my absence a month. I am going to send Hyacinth to Paris, who will bring you the particulars and a long letter. Nothing in my life, unless it be giving up the mission to Rome, has cost me more than this last sacrifice.

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[1] From the Duchess de Berry.

[2] Duchess de Berry.

PADOUA, Sept. 20, 1833.

I wrote to you yesterday from Ferrara of the unexpected change in my plans. I wanted to send Hyacinth to Paris, to carry you the particulars; but in that case I should be all alone, and I need him for many things. You will therefore have only this letter. They do not wish to make the grand journey without me. They dare not present themselves alone, and have besought me to finish my work of reconciliation. So much misfortune, courage, and fallen greatness, coming to miserable me for refuge, have overcome my resistance. After showing them all the inconveniences resulting to others and myself from this decision, they still persisted in it; and the only thing for me was to obey. I have made it a condition, that, as soon as the end is accomplished, I am to be free to return instantly to Paris; that is to say, to you. You will see me by the 15th of October. It is a great pity. I hoped to pass the St. Francis in my Infirmary with my old priests, and to receive your congratulations on the return of my saint's day. I was quite satisfied with my Italian trip. Only think, at Venice I found the Zanze; and I was at the detection of the most beautiful romance in the world.[1] History has come to strangle it; but you shall see the first chapter of it.

Write to me, I beg of you, a word at Prague, *poste restante*, where you wrote to me last May. I want to hear of your recovery. I want you to take care of my interests, or rather that of our party; and to be on the watch for any conjectures, without anticipating them.

My regards always to our young friends, and to you respects that are a worship. I leave this evening for Padoua. My unhappy client has been meanly prevented from going on. I go to embrace her son for her, and carry a letter of complaint. There is always a fine part for me to play, and I am very glad of it for your sake. I have many curious things to tell you.

PRAGUE, Sept. 26th.

I have arrived. Mme. Berry remained in Italy, for want of a passport. Affairs are going very badly here. I shall try and see if I can settle them. I shall see you soon. Ever yours.

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[1] While at Venice, Chateaubriand sought out the heroine of "Le Mie Prigioni," who, indignant at Signor Pellico's representations, had prepared a refutation of his statements, which she gave to Chateaubriand, and which is inserted in the eleventh volume of his memoirs. — ED.

PRAGUE, Sept. 29, 1833.

Well, I have now got through with all the honors, sacrifices, and detentions. By the 12th of next month, I shall be again in the midst of our little circle; I shall have resumed our habits and occupations; and I shall be with you again, always made dearer to me by absence, which also makes me more impatient to return to you. For a time I was in despair: I saw no end to the journey. It required quite a romance to bring about so sudden a *dénouement*. Expect to hear marvellous things. This very evening, I leave for the Abbaye-aux-Bois. As I am much fatigued by the rapidity and length of my journeys, I shall be obliged at present to stop at night, which will keep me several days longer on the road.

You have recovered from your troubles. If you are not entirely cured, we will take care of you, as the most precious thing we have in the world. Good-bye. Do not forget our young friends. I am yours, as you well know, entirely yours.

PARIS, Sunday, Oct. 6, 1833.

If I could take a step beyond my fifteen hundred leagues, I would do it for you and come to Passy; but I am at the end of my strength. The journey has confirmed my misgivings. I can do nothing for those people. Prague proscribes Blaye; and I, poor servitor, was obliged to exert my small authority to have the odious orders revoked. The poor young men, Legitimists, who went to compliment Henri,[1] were received like dogs. I have a great many strange things to tell you. I will come to see you to-morrow.

Mme. de Chateaubriand tells me that the papers talked about *my carriages* and *my suite*, in traversing Switzerland, from which they drew conclusions about my *wealth*. You know what that is. You are my treasure; and my suite, memories of you. Yet what a miserable country, where an honest man cannot even shelter himself behind his poverty! These gentlemen suppose that I sell myself as they do.

To-morrow I see you; you return on Tuesday; and then we will be all together again.

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[1] Count de Chambord, grandson of Charles X., who had just attained his majority. See "Memoires d'Outre Tombe," vol. xi. — ED.

CHAPTER XIX.

1833–1840.

Termination of M. de Chateaubriand's political life. — Mme. Récamier goes to Dieppe. — Letters from M. de Chateaubriand. — Publication of M. de Chateaubriand's translation of "Milton." — Letter of Béranger to M. de Chateaubriand. — Mme. Récamier and M. de Chateaubriand visit the Duke de Noailles at Maintenon. — Letter from M. de Chateaubriand. — Mme. Récamier visits the Duke de Laval. — Louis Napoleon. — Queen Hortense. — Letter of Mme. Salvage to Mme. Récamier. — Illness of Mme. Récamier. — Journey of M. de Chateaubriand to the South. — His letters. — The new-comers at the Abbaye-aux-Bois. — Journey of Mme. Récamier to Ems. — Letters of MM. de Chateaubriand and Ballanche. — Louis Napoleon at Boulogne. — Mme. Récamier visits him at the Conciergerie. — His Letters to Mme. Récamier and M. de Chateaubriand. — Victor Hugo to M. de Chateaubriand. — Reply of the latter.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND'S second journey to Prague marks the termination of his political career. Henceforward he was a spectator — sometimes a severe, but never an indifferent one — of the destinies of his country. He resumed his literary labors, and finished his noble life in a retirement wherein work, friendship, and a steadily increasing religious hope aided him in supporting the burden of age and infirmities.

From 1834 until his death, M. de Chateaubriand was seldom separated from Mme. Récamier for any long period, with the exception of his visit to England in 1843. Still, the number of letters that he addressed to her during these fourteen years was considerable. They manifest an affection always increasing, a more liberal mental action, still greater unconstraint, and a great deal less severity in judging persons and things than is to be found in his memoirs. In the former he yielded to the natural bent of his character, which, in spite of a disposition to ennui and melancholy, was, nevertheless, at bottom serene and kindly.

The admiration and adulation of his contemporaries in making an idol of M. de Chateaubriand, and placing him on a pedestal, subjected him to the great inconvenience of studying his attitude. When there were no strangers present, and he was alone with people whom he liked, and of whose affection he was certain, he gave himself up to his true nature, and became entirely himself; while his animated conversation, which often bordered on eloquence, the gayety of his sallies and his hearty laughs made his society incomparably delightful. No person in familiar intercourse was more simple or childlike than he, if I may employ this word in speaking of a man whose genius and character inspired so much respect. But the presence of a stranger, and sometimes a single word, sufficed to make him resume his mask of a great man, and his stiffness of manner. Upon his return from Prague, he was occupied in preparing his "Essay on English Literature," his translation of "Milton," and his "History of the Congress of Verona." As a relaxation, he made a trip of a few days to Fontainebleau. He was keenly alive to the beauties of nature; and, after spending some time in Paris, he felt the imperious necessity of refreshing himself, either by the sight of the sea, or by breathing the fragrance of the woods. He wrote from Fontainebleau:—

"The chateau, or the chateaux, is Italy in a Gallic desert. I was so much in the mood, and so sad, that I could have made a second part to "René," an old "René!" It cost me a battle with the muse to put aside this evil thought; yet I only extricated myself from it at the cost of five or six folio pages of foolishness, as we cause ourselves to be bled when the blood rushes to the head or the heart. The memoirs I was not able to touch. Jacques,[1] I could not read. I have quite enough of my own dreams. To you alone belongs the power of chasing away fays of the forest, who fasten themselves upon me to strangle me."

The following year, 1835, it was Mme. Récamier who went away. She spent a few weeks at Dieppe, and was

[1] George Sand.

there at the time of the attempt of Fieschi.[1] M. de Chateaubriand, after passing eight days with his friend on the seashore, had returned to Paris on the very day of this shameful catastrophe. He wrote to Mme. Récamier about it in these terms: —

PARIS, July 29, 1835.

I was not to write before to-morrow; but I wish to tell you, that I only learned to-day, through a hack-driver, the news of which the journals have apprised you. You see how lucky I am: in 1830, I arrive when the elder branch was falling; in 1835, at the time when the younger branch is thought to be tottering. Besides the crime, the evil result of this will be to render the existence of the new monarchy uncertain in the eyes of all, and perhaps to lead the Government into new measures against liberty; and, by these very measures, they will add to their danger. After these few words of news, I have nothing to say to you, but that I miss you, the sea, and your solitude.

July 31.

I am expecting this morning a few words from you. I have not done much work. This bloody adventure has taken up my attention. Will not the Duke de Noailles come to this new trial?

If any law is proposed against the liberty of the press, I shall be obliged to write: and this is my great difficulty. The heat is frightful here; and, though it costs me much, I am very glad that you are enjoying the fine sea-breezes which give you rest; and, as it is in your life that I live, it seems to me that they do me good at fifty leagues distance.

PARIS, Aug. 2, 1835.

You ask me for particulars. I know nothing more than the journals. I am scarcely in the mood to go to Maintenon; but I will go, since you are to be there. I am very melancholy here. I wander about my lonely boulevards, to wile away my Abbaye hours. I go home again, take care of Mme. de Chateaubriand, who is ill; go to bed, but I do not sleep; and then I work at "Milton."

The *hierophant*[2] came yesterday evening. Do not worry

[1] A Corsican, who constructed and set off an infernal machine to destroy the royal family. The king was uninjured, but fourteen persons were killed, and forty wounded. Fieschi was executed. — ED.

[2] M. Ballanche.

yourself about his sadness. He is animated by his glory, and does without you wonderfully well, considering his attachment to you.

I suppose that you will leave Dieppe next Thursday, or Friday the 10th. Let me know all about your plans. There will be no happiness for me until your return, notwithstanding what you may have thought in your days of ingratitude and calumny. Where can we go to die in peace? I have no longer any interest in a frivolous and apathetic society, that takes itself off in the midst of crimes that it attributes to pure accident. It ridicules the dangers it is bringing upon itself, and into which it is falling. To-morrow it will not exist, or it will be very different from what it is now.

"Milton" appeared in the spring of 1836. Whatever may be thought of the system of literal translation adopted by M. de Chateaubriand, it is a work of grand character, — the only one perhaps that gives in our language a true idea of the great poet of the English Revolution.

The "Essay on English Literature" serves as an introduction to "Milton." Béranger received both from the author. The celebrated song-writer, in thanking M. de Chateaubriand, wrote him a letter, which the latter gave to Mme. Récamier: —

BÉRANGER TO M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND.

FONTAINEBLEAU, June 27, 1836.

What! sir, you have not entirely forgotten me! What! have you still praises to bestow upon the poor poet of the streets? I cannot tell you how pleased I am with the present that you have kindly made me, and the accompanying letter. We vainly try to give up the world; it has powerful voices, which we always listen to with a new charm.

As you can well imagine, sir, I have not simply read the pages to which you called my attention. What an admirable epitome of extended and conscientious studies that essay is! It is only from you that I have learned any thing. In my youth, the "Genius of Christianity" taught me to appreciate the great works of antiquity; to-day, thanks to you again, I penetrate into English literature, and reconcile myself with Milton.

When I heard that you had undertaken this work, I predicted the immortal honor that would reflect from it upon "Paradise Lost," whose beauties France, even to this day perhaps, has not been able fully to appreciate.

You say in your essay, sir, that we become too readily enthusiastic over foreign literary men, who almost always repay our praises with injuries. The English are indebted to you for a beautiful crown; and they should take advantage of the occasion offered them to make amends for the affected forgetfulness of that sorcerer, Lord Byron. They have now something more to thank you for; but I fear that their egoism will cause them to imitate the example of the author of "Childe Harold."

The frivolous reason[1] you think you have discovered for his affectation in not mentioning your name in any of his works, recalls to me a circumstance of which I have never spoken to you. When the "Genius of Christianity" appeared, I, with my head full of magnificent projects, took the liberty of writing you an enormous letter, in which I spoke to you of nothing less than a long plan of an epic poem, and of an infinite number of pastoral poems, made or to be made. There were marvellous things in my confidences, which, in my opinion, were to enchant you; including the orthography perhaps, on which I was not yet very strong. To have done nothing but read my letter would have cost you time enough to make a volume. You preferred, I think, the interest of the public; and my letter, as it deserved to be, remained without a reply.

Happily, even in my youth, I had only brief illusions. I, who was born neither irritable nor a peer of England, soon explained to myself your silence, and my admiration for you was not lessened. Only I whispered to myself, "Perhaps he will not always disdain me thus." And now see, thirty years later, you are doing every thing that kindness can prompt to insure the fame of the singer. Is it not lucky, sir, to have had but one ambition, and that not a delusion?

You speak in your letter of going in search of another sun. I hope that it may be that of Fontainebleau, which I shall never quit. It is not very warm; but it is quite pure: and then here

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[1] Chateaubriand suggests that Byron did not mention him because he got the idea of "Childe Harold" from "René." "Could Lord Byron," he asks, "if he had borrowed from me, have had the weakness never to name me? Was I, then, one of those fathers who are disowned as soon as the children attain to power? Could Lord Byron, who quotes almost all the French contemporary writers, have been completely ignorant of me? Had he never heard me spoken of, when the English as well as French journals had, for twenty years, been filled with controversies about my works? when the 'New Times' drew a comparison between the writer of the 'Genius of Christianity' and the author of 'Childe Harold?'" Chateaubriand had an excessive admiration for Lord Byron; and this neglect on the part of the poet was a source of mortification to him. — Ed

you would have souvenirs the most pleasing to your genius. No news from Court when one lives as I do, unless one reads the journals. In the matter of shade, you ought to be very fastidious: yet it is very beautiful and very silent, my forest! because it is my own; but I will share it with you when you want to build a hermitage here.

If you only knew how one forgets Paris here, without ceasing to think of France! For you and me, sir, that thought is one of the conditions of our existence. This love of country in you does not decay any more than your genius; and in your new work how many times it has directed your pen! Be assured, that, with such a sentiment, you will end your days in that country where you have learned to lisp the language which you have since done so much to render illustrious, and which still expects from you a *chef d'œuvre*. Adieu, sir. Still give some thoughts to a man who daily remembers you, and who will never cease to hope that your happiness may be equal to your glory.

Your grateful and devoted servant, BÉRANGER.

After the publication of "Milton," M. de Chateaubriand left Paris with his wife on a visit; and Mme. Récamier went with her niece to La Chapelle-Saint-Eloi, where M. de Chateaubriand was to join them. He wrote from Sancerre, the 2nd of August, 1836: —

"We start certainly by next Saturday. We shall be at Paris Sunday the 7th. Stay at Saint-Eloi, and if I can come for you I will let you know; for I think that those smiling valleys will benefit your health. If I cannot obtain my liberty, you will come back to restore me to life. I do nothing here; I do not read a paper; I care for nothing but you. You are henceforward my only prospect in the future, and my only life. Pray for the pilgrim of the Holy Land in your little chapel."

A few days afterward he wrote again: —

PARIS, Aug. 8, 1836.

While you were worrying yourself so unduly, and complaining of not having long letters, so as to have an excuse for only writing two words, I was dying of ennui, and of vexations of all kinds, in order to obtain permission to go and join you, so that you should not come back too soon to Paris, and your health suffer from a return against your wishes. I have obtained this permission by dint of patience. Now I am obliged to have my carriage mended, which is very much out of repair.

It will be ready at the end of the week. I shall be able to start Sunday, or Monday the 15th.

Would you like me to go directly to Rivière-Thibouville,[1] and finish with Dieppe? or shall I begin with Dieppe and finish with Saint-Eloi? You have time to trace out my journey for me, if you reply immediately.

Do you see how I reply to all your peevishness? I protest to you, that for nobody in the world but you would I undertake a long journey at present. I hate to make any exertion. I positively wish to fix and wind up my life, and never make my appearance again in any fashion on the theatre of this world, not even in exploring great falls.

Hyacinth has got back from Geneva. He brings me my papers; and, though I have no heart for the memoirs after I have finished what relates to you, I will accomplish one or two pages a day while I live, in order to fulfil the painful conditions of my bargain, and to wile away the time until the arrival of the two hours I pass with you, which are all my life.

How transitory every thing is! Who is thinking to-day of that poor Carrel? It is scarcely a fortnight since he was alive amongst us! That man was a thousand times of more value than three-quarters of the men who survive him.

I do not know whether I shall see your friends, or whether they are in Paris, except M. Ampère. I do not care to see anybody. If you have any commissions, give them to me. Adieu, most ungrateful and spoiled of women.

I shall have the pleasure of seeing that little chapel, and praying there with you.

Remember me kindly to your niece and M. Lenormant.

M. de Chateaubriand passed several days with Mme. Récamier at her niece's house, and then all the colony of the Abbaye-aux-Bois set off for the Château de Maintenon, the residence of the Duke and Duchess de Noailles. M. de Chateaubriand was charmed with this place, so associated with Louis XIV. and Mme. de Maintenon; but it was impossible for him to be long contented out of the routine of his daily habits, and he was the first to return to Paris.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

PARIS, Oct. 15, 1836.

Here am I, away from you, and it will be a long while before you return to me. Oh! do not delay it too long, I beg of you.

[1] The nearest post-station to M. Lenormant's property.

You are to blame for this: you have accustomed me not to do without you. The fine weather has returned. I regret not having made the trip to Malesherbes.[1] Do you know why? Because in travelling I feel less the void of your absence. Your mind is so perverse, that you will perhaps interpret this the wrong way.

I was charmed with your hosts. Pray say to them how much I regretted leaving. Mme. de Noailles has given me permission to return, and has promised to change nothing in my room. I have taken my sketches of the chateau.[2] M. de Noailles will be pleased with them: at least I have done my best.

My kind regards to all my old and young friends. Until Thursday then! Return. I will write to-morrow to Montigny; but I must get the address, as I do not know it.

Oct. 17, 1836.

I am very unhappy here without you. I do not know what to do. Yesterday I passed the day seated on the stones in La Place Louis XV., looking at the obelisk, or looking at nothing rather. But you are to return on Thursday. I still regret not having gone to Malesherbes. I do not know what to do, because I have nothing to do. It is quite time that we should leave for Italy. . . .

Instead of returning to Paris, Mme. Récamier, with MM. Ballanche and Ampère, visited her old and faithful friend, the Duke de Laval, at his estate of Montigny, where he had resided since the Revolution of July, and where he died eight months after Mme. Récamier's visit.

On her return to the Abbaye-aux-Bois, at the end of October, Mme. Récamier learnt of the movement at Strasbourg by the Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, who was brought to Paris for trial. The Duchess de St. Leu hastened after him, but secretly. Fearing that her presence at Paris would irritate the Government, she stopped at Viry, at the house of the Duchess de Raguse, from which place it was easy to take measures to obtain a mitigation of the fate of her son.

As to Mme. Salvage, her faithful body-guard, she came

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1 The estate of his nephew, Count Louis de Chateaubriand.

2 M. de Chateaubriand promised to describe Maintenon in his memoirs; but he finished only a fragment, which he gave to Mme. Récamier It is inserted in the original, vol. ii. pp. 453–469. — Ed.

directly to the Abbaye, and asked an asylum from Mme. Récamier. Her unexpected appearance, together with the circumstances, caused a great deal of surprise. I need not say that all Mme. Récamier's friends, however little they might fancy Mme. Salvage, and whatever their opinion with regard to the adventure that brought her to Paris in the suite of the Queen Hortense, were filled with respect for her devotion to her friend.

Mme. Récamier went the next day to Viry, to see Hortense: she found her in great agony. Though relieved from her first fears in regard to the safety of her son, the idea of his leaving the country for America was the more distressing, as she knew she was dying of an incurable malady. Mme. Récamier was much moved by the great change in her appearance: she never saw her again.

Queen Hortense returned with Mme. Salvage to the Château d'Arenenberg. But, in her state of health, this hurried journey, and the terrible anxieties caused by the arrest and trial of her son, proved very injurious. Mme. Salvage frequently acquainted Mme. Récamier with her condition: —

MME. SALVAGE TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

ARENENBERG, April 13, 1837.

I wrote you a long letter four days ago, dear friend, telling you of my unhappiness. I received yesterday your letter of the 7th, for which I thank you: I needed it much, and it is a consolation to me.

I have informed Madame the Duchess de St. Leu of the lively interest you take in her troubles, and have given her your message. She was much touched by it, even to tears; and has begged me several times to tell you how much she appreciated it.

I have not replied to you sooner, because I hoped to give you better tidings. Alas, it is quite the contrary! After a consultation of the physicians of Constance and Zurich with her own physician, Dr. Conneau; Professor Lisfranc, from Paris, was called in, on account of his skill, and also because he is the recognized authority with regard to the operation two of these gentlemen thought necessary.

Well, after a careful examination, the opinion of M. Lisfranc and that of the other three consulting physicians was, that the operation was impossible. They were unanimous in pronounc-

ing an irrevocable sentence; and they have left us no hope in human resources. I still like to trust in the infinite goodness of God, whom I implore with earnest prayers.

The mind of Madame the Duchess is as calm as one could expect in a position like hers. They told her that they would not perform the operation, because it was not necessary, and because a mere treatment would suffice, with time and patience, to produce a perfect cure. She had been quite resigned to submit to the operation, showing a noble courage: now she is happy at not being obliged to undergo it, and is filled with hope.

In anticipation of the operation, — of which, against my advice, she had been told a fortnight before M. Lisfranc came, — she made her will, and attended to the last duties of religion.

On the 30th of March, an hour after she had partaken of the communion, she had the joy, which she looked upon as a divine favor, of receiving a large package from her son, — the first since the departure of the "L'Orient." His letter, which is very long, contains a relation of all that he has done, all that has happened to him, and much that he has felt, since he left Arenenberg until he wrote, the 14th of January, on board the frigate "Andromeda," lying in the harbor of Rio Janeiro, where he was not permitted to go on shore. He had on board M. de Chateaubriand's works, and re-read them during a frightful storm that lasted a fortnight, and allowed of no other occupation, and scarcely that. Pray tell this to M. de Chateaubriand, in recalling me personally to his kind remembrance.

Think of me sometimes; think of my painful position. To give to a person whom we love, and whom we are soon to lose, a care that is perfectly ineffectual; to seek to alleviate sharp and almost continual suffering, and only succeed very imperfectly; to wear a calm countenance when the heart is torn; to deceive, to try unceasingly to inspire hopes that we ourselves no longer cherish, — ah! believe me, this is frightful, and one would cheerfully give up life itself. Adieu, dear friend; you know how I love you.

This state of suffering lasted nearly a year. Queen Hortense did not die until the 5th of October, 1837.

In the meanwhile, Mme. Récamier's own health had become visibly impaired. In consequence of a nervous fever that affected her painfully, she had almost entirely lost her sleep; but she thought so little of herself and so much of others, and was so averse to disturbing the habits of her friends, and especially those of M. de Chateaubriand,

that her illness made no change in her manner of life. In 1837, more alarming symptoms manifested themselves. An obstinate cough; a sudden loss of voice, which lasted often several hours; and a sort of nervous spasm of the larynx, that rendered breathing very difficult, led to apprehensions that the vocal chords were seriously affected. These symptoms, so alarming in appearance, were, however, only nervous. But this painful state of suffering, which continued almost a year, rendered her friends and family extremely anxious.

M. de Chateaubriand wrote to her the 4th of November, 1837:—

"I am going to leave this note at your door myself. In order to re-assure myself, I say to myself, that everybody is sick around me. You have filled me with such terror by not receiving me, that I feel already as though you had left me. It is I, remember, who must go first."

And some days later:—

"Never talk of what is to become of me without you: I have not done so much evil in the sight of Heaven, that you should be called away before me. I see with pleasure that I am ill; that I am worse since yesterday, and do not gain strength. I bless God for all this, so long as you persist in not getting well. So my health is in your hands, remember that."

Mme. Récamier did not pass the winter of 1837–1838 at the Abbaye-aux-Bois. Discouraged by her state of health, she had taken a dislike to her rooms, and even to the Abbaye-aux-Bois itself; and eagerly accepted the offer of Baron Pasquier, to lend her his small house in the Rue d'Anjou. She passed four months there, and returned to the Abbaye in the spring; still suffering, but in a comparatively better state of health.

At the end of June, M. de Chateaubriand left Paris for a trip to the southern provinces; and Mme. Récamier passed the time of his absence at Châtenay, with her friend Mme. de Boigne.

M. de Chateaubriand's journey was a veritable triumph. Everywhere received with enthusiasm, he enjoyed these demonstrations of popular favor, and recounted them with delight:—

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

I have left my triumphs at Marseilles to go and see the place where Bonaparte, by his landing, changed the face of the world and our destinies. I am writing to you in a small room, beneath the window of which the sea is breaking. The sun is setting: it is Italy again, in all respects. In an hour, I shall start for a place two leagues off, — Gulf Juan: it will be night when I arrive there. I shall see that deserted strand, where that man landed with his little fleet. I shall prepare myself for solitude, the sea, and sky: the man has passed away for ever.

I must return to you. Women, men, skies, palm-trees, are not worth one moment passed in your sweet presence. Therein lies the only repose for me.

But, *mon Dieu*, how many things I have seen! I am oppressed by them: I do not know whether I shall remember them. I will relate to you what I did at Marseilles, at the grave of the father of our young friend.[1]

Adieu. I am ready to drop from lassitude, and am going to start again on my journey. I shall be at Lyons on the 31st.

During the years immediately following the Revolution of July, several circumstances prevented Mme. Récamier from extending her social relations beyond the circle of her old friends. In the first place, M. de Chateaubriand's projects were very uncertain; he constantly talked of settling out of France: and now that he, the first writer of his time, was reduced to the painful necessity of earning his livelihood by his own labor, his means of living were precarious, and promised no security for the future. Affairs in general were also uncertain, and party animosities violent and bitter. But, as years passed on, these feelings softened down; and after M. de Chateaubriand had concluded the bargain so repugnant to his pride, and to which he would never have consented had not the future comfort of his wife been involved in the question; in a word, when he had sold his memoirs, then Mme. Récamier was anxious to fulfil, in regard to him, a double task, — not only to render this noble life calm and serene, by the influence of deep and true affection, but at the same time to gain for it the homage, admiration, and respect of its contemporaries.

[1] M. Ampère, of the Academy of Sciences, died at Marseilles in 1836.

Such was the mission which Mme. Récamier entered upon with ardor, and which she accomplished at the expense of her own repose; at the sacrifice of her tastes, freedom, and health. She became so wholly necessary to M. de Chateaubriand, that her shortest absences filled him with despair Whenever Mme. Récamier left Paris, Mme. de Chateaubriand hastened to her to find out the probable time of her return. "But what will be done then?" she asked; "what is to become of M. de Chateaubriand? What is he going to do, if you stay away long?"

In thus extending, on his account, the circle of her friends, Mme. Récamier was obliged in a measure to resign what I shall call her interior life. When her salon was crowded with illustrious people of all kinds, when her literary parties excited envy, the world thought that to gain such a position was the end she had in view, and gave her credit for skilful calculation and a rare managing faculty; while in reality it was all to be attributed to the devotion of friendship.

Among the new-comers in the salon of the Abbaye-aux-Bois at this time, I must place M. Alexis de Tocqueville. The great success of his admirable work on the "Democracy of America" had made him the fashion. He was related to M. de Chateaubriand, and possessed all the qualities likely to please him, — true and high talent, aristocratic manners and tastes, liberal and generous views. He had besides just made a marriage of inclination, which, with his personal attractions and the *finesse* of his mind, was more than sufficient to make him a favorite with Mme. Récamier.

M. Louis de Loménie, Frederic Ozanam, M. Charles Brifaut, and M. Léonce de Lavergne were also frequent visitors. M. Sainte Beuve had already long known M. de Chateaubriand and Mme. Récamier. Both liked him, and openly testified their feelings: but this clever writer's social relations are always of an intermittent character. You are very much taken with the almost caressing grace of his manners, with the subtilty, *finesse*, and unaffected style of his conversation; you see him often, and flatter yourself that the pleasure is reciprocal: but all of a sudden you lose him; he escapes you. But at the time of which

I write, M. Sainte Beuve was one of the most constant visitors at the Abbaye-aux-Bois.

Among all the women-authors who were received in the salon of Mme. Récamier, and whom she welcomed with so much interest, grace, and even indulgence, one alone became intimate there. Mme. Amable Tastu deserved this exception from the nobility of her character, her tact and discretion. M. de Chateaubriand, who had a horror of *blue stockings*, and who scarcely forgave women for meddling with literature, made, like his friend, an exception in the case of Mme. Tastu: the kind and strong good sense, characteristic of her talent, pleased him extremely.

In the summer of 1840, Mme. Récamier was sent by her physicians to Ems. It cost her much to undertake this journey, as she went alone, unaccompanied by any of her friends; but her health was too necessary to these very friends — and especially to M. Ballanche and M. de. Chateaubriand, who were both growing infirm — for Mme. Récamier to neglect any means of recovery. She left home therefore on the 18th of July, leaving M. de Chateaubriand at Paris, and M. Ballanche at St. Vrain, with the Countess d'Hautefeuille.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

PARIS, July 19, 1840.

You are gone: and I no longer know what to do with myself. Paris is the wilderness without its beauty. We have come to no decision, and shall not probably. When you are not here, I have no heart for any thing, — neither for resolutions nor projects. If I had only something on hand! But the memoirs are finished; past life as well as present.

Are you aware that the Duchess of Cumberland wrote to me from Ems? You will not write to me: but I shall write to you, though scarcely able to form a letter. The old cat has no longer strength to throw out its paw. I am driven into myself, my writing is growing finer, and my ideas becoming obliterated: I have only one left, and that is you. Hold yourself ready to go to Italy. The news is almost always at the service of falsehood, no matter to what party it relates.

The sun at least cannot deceive: it will warm up my old blood that is freezing in my veins.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO M. BALLANCHE.

[Dictated.] PARIS, Aug. 7, 1840.

I have perceived only too well, my dear and old friend, that you have not been here for eight days. Mme. de Chateaubriand and I do not cease to regret your absence; and yet we reconcile ourselves to it, knowing how much good the fine air of the country, and the kind attentions of your pleasant hosts will do you. Pray thank M. and Mme. d'Hautefeuille a thousand times for me. I would gladly avail myself of their kind invitation, were I not obliged to take care of my poor invalid, and were I not ill myself. You see that I cannot write with my own hand. I am obliged to live now fighting with the gout and old age: two absurd things.

The news from Ems was not so favorable last night. My incredulity, in respect to remedies and physicians, prevented me from dissuading our friend from undertaking this journey; but the only thing in which I have faith is her good constitution, which is not impaired. It will not be long, however, before we shall see the traveller again who leaves such a void in society, and in the heart of her friends. M. Ampère's affair is to be decided to-day. I have written to three Academicians: I hope and fear.

I embrace you, my old friend. Give my respects to M. and Mme. d'Hautefeuille.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

PARIS, Aug. 8, 1840.

I wrote to you day before yesterday. Your letter of to-day gave me great pleasure. You are going to keep on with the baths: you are doing well. Take courage: have nothing to reproach yourself with, so that we shall have no scruple about keeping you with us. But return, and travel no more. I shall look for you the first fortnight in September.

You write charmingly: I read you without any difficulty. As for me, I show by my scribbling how I am failing; but my affections are as strong as ever. They have not dwindled away like my writing, and they are firmer than my hand. Nothing new with me, except that I have been to dine at St. Cloud with Mme. de Chateaubriand and Hyacinth. I took a short walk in those great woods, where, a long time ago, I wasted many years. I did not find them again.

Yesterday M. Ampère made a good beginning. We hope to completely succeed by next Friday. I am always for peace. Prince Louis Bonaparte has just attempted a *coup de main* at Boulogne. He has been taken with all his friends.

But where did you get the idea that I complained of your silence? I have not said a word about it. I am the most under control, and the most submissive of all who love you.

M. BALLANCHE TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Here I am, settled with Mme. d'Hautefeuille. The short journey somewhat fatigued me, but all I needed was a good night's rest. Now my only anxiety is to hear of your arrival at Ems.

Since you left, I have been seized with an historical fever; as soon as my "Theodicea" is finished, I want to write a bit of history, but wholly history. Between ourselves, I recognize at present only three men who possess what I call the historic faculty. These are M. de Chateaubriand, Guizot, and Augustin Thierry. Sismondi has all that study and labor can give, but he lacks the gift. The historic faculty has just come to life in me; rather late, but perhaps soon enough to produce a little poor fruit, late in the season. I have seen M. and Mme. de Chateaubriand. He had the kindness to come and see me himself. As he has written to you, I will not talk to you of their health or their plans, especially as they are still in an undecided state.

You cannot imagine how sorry I should have been had you not gone to Ems. I should always have feared that your health would have suffered from not doing so. May you return perfectly well, to find me settled, and M. and Mme. de Chateaubriand leading a pleasant life with us! Let me work at a few bits of history to close my career, and let the Gobert prize be given to the most deserving, and all will be for the best. M. and Mme. d'Hautefeuille are the perfection of hospitality. I cannot express to you how attentive and kind they are. I go to bed very early, the family stay in my room, and M. and Mme. d'Hautefeuille receive their visitors around my bed. I have not gone to work yet, but I shall not delay.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Aug. 10, 1840.

M. Ampère has written to you concerning Mme. Salvage. When I was aware of her arrest, I asked for a permit to visit her. I have seen her: she is sad, but not anxious. You see that we have peace again, and that I am always right. The weather is magnificent: you can conceive how glad I am of it on your account; if the waters cure you, I shall have faith in remedies. I stand in great need of the fountain of youth, but the time for it is gone by. Not that my feel-

ings for you will ever grow old; but every day time steals from me an eye, an ear, a hand. If it were not for you, beautiful and dear one, I should not forgive myself for having lingered so long under the sun. Do not hasten your return: the worst is over; only a few days more of patience. I hoped to write a little better this morning, having set about it early; but the morning mocks me, as well as the evening.

Prince Louis is to be tried; he has been very foolish, but has shown much courage. His enterprise will have the effect of rendering the arrival of the remains[1] less dangerous. Come: God knows, you will be welcome!

From these letters, it is evident that Mme. Récamier was right in deeming herself necessary to the two friends whose health was becoming more and more impaired. M. de Chateaubriand, afflicted with gout, rapidly lost the use of his limbs; M. Ballanche lived only upon milk and vegetables. This Pythagorean diet, the only one that his stomach could bear, was sufficient to sustain him; but it left him in a very feeble condition. To keep up the spirits of M. de Chateaubriand, who was becoming more and more depressed, required constant and daily effort on the part of Mme. Récamier. In order to effect this object, she made use of all the young intellects, who became unwittingly her accomplices in the task of amusing a noble genius.[2]

Upon her return from Ems, Mme. Récamier found that the Gobert prize had been given by the Academy of Inscriptions to M. Ampère; and that Prince Louis Napoleon was to be tried by the Chamber of Peers. Though she had not kept up any personal relations with Prince Louis since her visit to Arenenberg, Mme. Récamier was summoned to appear, and was interrogated by the examining

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[1] Napoleon I. — Ed.

[2] Of the success of these efforts, Sainte Beuve thus speaks: — "Mme. de Maintenon was never more ingenious in amusing Louis XIV. than Mme. Récamier in interesting Chateaubriand. 'I have always remarked,' said Boileau, on returning from Versailles, 'that, when the conversation does not turn on himself, the king immediately gets tired, and is either ready to yawn or go away.' Every great poet, when he is growing old, is a little like Louis XIV. in this respect. Each day, Mme. Récamier contrived a thousand pleasant things to excite and flatter him. She got together, from all quarters, friends for him, — new admirers. She chained us all to the feet of her rival with links of gold." — Ed.

magistrate. This slight annoyance did not prevent her from interesting herself in the prisoner. She solicited permission to communicate with the Prince, and went to see him at the Conciergerie. The permit "to communicate with the prisoner, Charles Louis Napoleon Bonaparte," that I have before me, bears date the 12th of September; it authorizes two visits. Mme. Récamier made but one. The Prince appeared touched by her sympathy, and escorted her as far as the sentinels would permit. Condemned to imprisonment for life, and shut up in the fortress of Ham, he did not forget the visit he had received.

Two years afterward, he sent Mme. Récamier a pamphlet of his, just published, as a mark of grateful remembrance. She thanked him for it, and received in reply the following note: —

HAM, June 9, 1842.

MADAME, — It was extremely kind of you to take the trouble to acknowledge the pamphlet[1] that I took the liberty to send you. I have, for a long time, desired to thank you, madame, for the pleasant visit that you so kindly paid me at the Conciergerie. I have remembered it with deep gratitude, and I am happy to have an opportunity to express to you my sentiments. You will oblige me extremely, madame, if you will hand the enclosed letter to M. de Chateaubriand, whose benevolent interest in me has deeply touched me.

You are so used to making happy all who approach you, that you will not be astonished at my great pleasure in receiving a proof of your sympathy, and in learning that you were pleased to compassionate my chagrins.

Believe me, madame, very respectfully yours,

NAPOLEON LOUIS B.

PRINCE LOUIS NAPOLEON TO M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND.

CITADEL OF HAM, June 28, 1842.

SIR VISCOUNT, — Some twelve years ago, while walking one day outside of the Porta Pia at Rome, I followed silently the Ambassador of Charles X., regretting that frigid politics prevented me from testifying to the illustrious author of the "Genius of Christianity" all my admiration for him. I was far from thinking then, that the power which he represented would very soon be overthrown, and that the tri-colored would

[1] "Historical Fragments," 1688 and 1830.

be as hostile to my family as the white flag: and that the noble representative of an inimical court would be, in a few years, the only eminent man who would come to give me, in my imprisonment, marks of sympathy.

If these reminiscences recall the vicissitudes of human affairs, they prove also that lofty sentiments always remain the same. In every position in your life, you have, Sir Viscount, incessantly sought to console the unhappy; and certainly you have inspired, even in men most opposed to your opinions, a sincere admiration for the great writer, and a profound esteem for the politician.

I need not tell you, Sir Viscount, how your letter has touched me; and I would have expressed my gratitude sooner, had I not received several visits that have taken up all my time.

In order to occupy my leisure hours, I propose to undertake a large work, about which I shall venture in the future to ask of you some advice. I want to write the history of Charlemagne, and show the influence that this great man exercised on the destiny of the world during his life and after his death. When I shall have collected all the necessary materials, I hope, that if I submit to you some questions, I shall not trespass upon your extreme kindness.

Receive, Sir Viscount, the assurance of my high esteem and distinguished consideration. NAPOLEON LOUIS BONAPARTE.

When Prince Louis Napoleon returned to France, and arrived in Paris in 1848 as a Deputy of the people, one of the first things he did was to present himself at the Abbaye-aux-Bois. It happened that he did not find Mme. Récamier at home. It was just after M. de Chateaubriand's death: she was plunged in grief, and neither saw nor tried to see the Prince again.

I give here two notes exchanged between an eminent poet, now an exile, and M. de Chateaubriand, at the close of 1840, the same year in which Prince Louis was tried.

VICTOR HUGO TO M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND.

Dec. 16, 1840.

SIR VISCOUNT, — After twenty-five years, there remains only great things and great men, Napoleon and Chateaubriand.

I hope you will be pleased with my dedicating these few verses to you. With the illustrious dead, who inspired them, you made long ago a generous peace.

Permit me, Sir Viscount, to offer them to you as a fresh token of my old and profound admiration

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO VICTOR HUGO.

PARIS, Dec. 18, 1840.

I believe in Bonaparte, sir, but not in myself. He made and signed the peace that he was pleased to offer me at St. Helena. Your last poem is worthy of your talent. No one feels so much as I the greatness of Napoleon's genius, with those reservations that you yourself make in two or three of your most beautiful odes. No matter how great a man's fame may be, I shall always prefer liberty to glory.

You are aware, sir, that I am expecting you at the Academy.

Yours devotedly and admiringly,

CHATEAUBRIAND.

CHAPTER XX.

1840–1849.

Inundation at Lyons. — Concert given by Mme. Récamier for the benefit of the sufferers. — Mlle. Rachel. — M. de Chateaubriand at Néris. — His letters. — Mme. Récamier to Mme. Lenormant. — M. Ballanche elected a Member of the French Academy. — His love for inventions. — Letter from M. Ballanche. — M. de Chateaubriand at Bourbonne-les-Bains. — His letters. — The Count de Chambord to M. de Chateaubriand. — M. de Chateaubriand's journey to England. — His letters. — Mme. Récamier at Auteuil. — Mme. Guizot. — Mme. Récamier to Mme. Lenormant. — Mme. Récamier's habits. — M. de Chateaubriand at Venice. — His letters. — Letters from M. de Chateaubriand and M. Ballanche. — Mme. Récamier to Mme. Lenormant. — Mme. Récamier's blindness. — Summer at Beau-Séjour. — Death of Mme. de Chateaubriand. — Operation upon Mme. Récamier's eyes. — Death of M. Ballanche. — Mme. Récamier refuses the hand of M. de Chateaubriand. — Revolution of February. — Death of M. de Chateaubriand. — Mme. Récamier attacked by cholera. — Her death.

THE winter of 1840–41 was signalized by a great disaster. The Rhone and the Saone overflowed, causing suffering to the industrious population of Lyons. The Government, and public and private charity throughout France, moved by the accounts of so much grief and misery, rivalled each other in their efforts and sacrifices in behalf of the sufferers.

Mme. Récamier, full of pity for her native city, got up a subscription soirée in aid of the sufferers. As soon as her plan was known, it was eagerly entered into by all her immediate circle, who disputed for the honor of disposing of the tickets. The price at first was fixed at twenty francs for a single person; but it was almost always exceeded, such was the emulation of charity and curiosity. In less than ten days, four thousand three hundred and ninety francs had been received.

Lady Byron paid a hundred francs for a ticket, which she did not use, but profited by to obtain admission to the

Abbaye. She came there twice; and Mme. Récamier was much interested in the conversation of one whose unfortunate connection with a great poet had given her so painful a notoriety.

French society was no less eager than were foreigners to obtain tickets, and the intimate friends of Mme. Récamier were united in their efforts to render the evening successful. The Duke de Noailles provided the refreshments, and sent his steward and servants to superintend and make the necessary arrangements. The Marquis de Verac furnished the carriages and attendants put at the disposal of the artists. M. de Chateaubriand himself, contrary to all his usual habits, not only stayed until the end of the evening, but took his post at eight o'clock at the door of the first salon, and did the honors most agreeably.

The assembly, thus called together by the voice of a woman, was distinguished and brilliant. The rooms were crowded with illustrious men, and young, beautiful, and elegant women. For the artists, a stage had been erected facing the picture of Corinne. The crowd was great, and the grand salon could only be reached with extreme difficulty. Upon the arrival of the Turkish Ambassador, Reschid Pascha, a place was assigned to him on the first step of the stage, owing to the impossibility of finding him any other seat. There he sat, surrounded, crowded, and almost buried in a flood of lace, flowers, and white shoulders. A stranger, who was inquiring the names of all the celebrities, noticed his long beard and fine head, and asked who he was. It was just as Mlle. Rachel began her rôle of Esther, not yet performed at the theatre. Impatient at the question, the person appealed to replied, "Eh! why don't you see it is Mordecai?" This caused a laugh.

Mme. Pauline Viardot, Garcia, Rubini, and Lablache kindly gave their services; and, electrified by the attention and applause of so brilliant an audience, surpassed themselves. As for Mlle. Rachel, it was not the last time that her tragic tones were heard in the salon of the old Abbaye; she had been presented there, the year after her début at the Comédie Française, and had been received with warm admiration. Who ever has not heard and seen Mlle.

Rachel in a salon, can have only an incomplete idea of her feminine attractions, and of her talent as an actress. Her features, a little too delicate for the stage, gained much by being seen nearer. Her voice was a little hard; but her accent was enchanting, and she modulated it to suit the limits of a salon with marvellous instinct. Her deportment was in irreproachable taste; and the ease and promptitude with which this young girl, without education or knowledge of good society, seized its manners and tone, was certainly the perfection of art.

Deferential with dignity, modest, natural, and easy, she talked interestingly of her art and her studies. Her success in society was immense. No actress has ever been treated by women of fashion with so much kindness and partiality; but she grew tired of these successes in high life, and disappeared from the salons in which she had been the most spoiled. She did not cease, however, to come to the Abbaye-aux-Bois, and always testified a deep gratitude toward Mme. Récamier.

If I have dwelt rather long upon this soirée given for the benefit of the poor of Lyons, it is because it was one of the last times Mme. Récamier had any dealings with society at large. The following year she renewed, without going out of her own personal circle, this appeal to charity, and with no less success. The object was to rebuild a portion of the village of Cressin, — the cradle of the Récamiers, — destroyed by fire.

M. Ballanche undertook to transmit to the Mayor of Lyons the proceeds of the first entertainment. It was Mme. Récamier's wish that the sum should be divided among a small number of the sufferers, and not distributed in insignificant fractions; and her wishes were faithfully carried out.

After all I have said of this soirée, may I be permitted to state a little fact, of very trivial and entirely feminine interest? It is the singular success as a beauty Mme. Récamier had in this brilliant re-union of young women. It was thought that she eclipsed them all. Mme. Récamier, so to say, never knew old age. In the latter part of her life, she lost her bloom, and her figure became slightly

bent; but she still kept the beauty of her smile, and her movements were still distinguished by an extreme elegance. She concealed her hair, that had turned gray in 1824 at Rome; but she did absolutely nothing to hide the effects of age, and this sincerity no doubt contributed to prolong her personal charms long beyond the ordinary period.[1]

In the summer of 1842, M. de Chateaubriand went to Néris for his health, and Mme. Récamier passed the time of his absence in the country: first at St. James, in the Bois de Bologne; then at Maintenon, where M. de Chateaubriand passed a few hours on his return from Néris. But absence had now become the more painful, as M. de Chateaubriand was seldom able to write himself, and was obliged to employ an amanuensis, which was annoying to him. The tone of his correspondence is saddened by it; and, in spite of the interest of his letters, I shall only cite a small number of them: —

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

NÉRIS, July 20, 1842.

I am making my last trial of travelling: I anticipated disappointments. Henceforward, it will be useless for me to change my abode. I and my infirmities keep repeating to each other everlastingly the same thing; so now we will be silent. The only thing that has given me pleasure, is in greeting the swallows of the Loire again: but they have not been here all this while; they have returned. In the interval between the two springs, they have made use of the sky. I have no knowledge of what is going on; and could put up with this ignorance, if I knew how you were.

I have met nobody on the journey, except some lonely laborers, busy in filling up the ruts in the road. They followed me, like Time that marches behind us, effacing our footsteps.

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1 "She did not struggle," said Sainte Beuve. "She resigned herself gracefully to the first touch of Time. She understood, that for one who had enjoyed such success as a beauty, in order to seem yet beautiful, she must make no pretensions. A friend, who had not seen her for many years, complimented her upon her looks. 'Ah! my dear friend,' she replied, 'it is useless for me to deceive myself. From the moment I noticed that the little Savoyards in the street no longer turned to look at me, I knew that all was over.'" — ED.

I wanted to write to you from Briare and from Moulins, "for I cannot flee from you." But Mme. de Sévigné was at least happy in meeting M. Bascle in the street, to recommend her daughter to him. Who would care any thing for my recommendations? But pray yourself for your servitor: God will listen to you. I have faith in that intelligent and Christian rest which awaits us at the end of the day's work. I trust that the young professor, to whom I am so much attached, is not forgetting me. My regards to M. Brifaut. I do not speak of my friend M. Ballanche. He lives content, secluded in his glory. In the retirement of his *hermitage he has both food and clothing.*

Give me credit for having written to you with my own hand. I wanted to see whether the neighborhood of the Springs had already helped me any. M. de Montmart and M. de Castellane (the son) are here. I am expecting a few lines from you.

We have just heard about your troubles in Paris. The poor Duke d'Orleans! What is youth good for? I talk like the maimed fox.

MME. RÉCAMIER TO MME. LENORMANT.

MAINTENON, Aug. 13, 1842.

These lines will reach you at Lyons. You will see again that Hôtel de l'Europe, where you once had the saddest of aunts. I follow you to Belley, the place where I first saw you; and in my mind's eye I still see the lawn before your grandfather's house, where the idea of asking you from your parents first occurred to me. By this adoption, I hoped to cheer the old age of your uncle; and what I meant to do for him, I did for myself. You are his gift to me, and I shall always bless his memory for it. As I can only write you a few lines, I recommend you to take care of your health, of which you are too negligent. It is our old quarrel, and your only fault. Tell M. Lenormant that I beg him to watch over you. My own health is detestable.

The Duke and Duchess de Noailles are so perfect in their hospitality, that I am hardly conscious I am not at home. M. de Chateaubriand is to be here on the 20th; but I do not think that he will stay more than one day. We shall return to Paris by the way of St. Vrain, where we shall find the philosopher Ballanche between the "Dragonneau"[1] and "L'Ame Exilée."[2]

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[1] His housekeeper, whose temper was not perfect.

[2] Countess Charles d'Hautefeuille, author of "L'Âme Exilée," "Lys d'Israël," &c.

I do not know where I shall go afterward, or what I shall do the month of September. Write to me often, and answer my questions. I have heard nothing, as yet, of M. Lenormant's relations with the Institute. Thank him for his very kind letter. M. Brifaut is always good and kind. He was sorry to leave Maintenon: he is in his element here. The beauties of the royal chateau, the souvenirs of Louis XIV. and Mme. de Maintenon, but especially the pleasure of seeing himself come in between the Duchesses de Noailles and de Talleyrand, are delights of which he never tires. I am almost pleased with a weakness that gives him so much satisfaction.

Your company is much desired: the Duke de Noailles hopes for it next summer. Adieu, dear Amelia. Do not let your children forget me. I am not much to them: they can only love me through you. I hope it will not always be so. Once more adieu. Yours affectionately.

This year (1842), M. Ballanche was elected a Member of the French Academy. His reception was the last public meeting that M. de Chateaubriand attended. This day, which was looked upon by all the circle of the Abbaye as a great event, was regarded by M. Ballanche with the utmost indifference. Mme. Récamier did not share his imperturbability, and keenly enjoyed his success. Not that M. Ballanche had no interest in his own glory, and no desire for fame. He knew very well his own value; and the confidence he felt in the judgment of posterity made him very calm concerning that of his contemporaries. Besides, it was a moral and philosophic influence that he desired to exert, and he attached more importance to this than to literary success. He had his disciples; and M. de Chateaubriand had dubbed him the *hierophant*, in joking him upon the small political and religious sect that recognized him as their head.

But while capable of conceiving the most beautiful metaphysical theories, of divining the laws of history, and clothing his thoughts in noble and poetical garb, he was far from being able to manage his own affairs.

In 1833, M. Guizot, Minister of Public Instruction, without any solicitation, gave him a literary pension of eighteen hundred francs. But M. Ballanche accepted it with extreme reluctance, and afterward gave it up without

the consent of Mme. Récamier. It weighed, he said, on his conscience: because other men of letters had greater need of it than he.

In his love for humanity, and without even calculating his own resources, his generosity knew no limits; and little by little he had dissipated his moderate but honorable fortune. Besides his generosity, he had another infallible means of ruining himself, — he was possessed by a passion for mechanical inventions, and his essays of this sort cost him dear. This letter, which he wrote to Mme. Récamier, whose judgment, as well as friendship made her uneasy with regard to the future of this excellent but imprudent philosopher, will give an idea of the extent to which he carried his love for inventions: —

M. BALLANCHE TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

By the end of the year, I shall be, you may rest assured, in an excellent position. I have quite a large interest in a very considerable affair that is just on the point of success. The facts are these: —

Three of us have furnished an engineer, whose name is not known to you, — M. Précorbin, — with the means of solving the problem about which so many men are occupied, without as yet coming to any result. He is now perfectly confident. The invention in question is a great improvement in the application of steam. You may be certain that it will result in a vast progress in all matters in which steam is employed. The system of railways will be completely changed, and navigation much benefited. We have come to the point where the capitalists have only to manage the business part of the affair. They are all found.

I do not meddle in any way with the management, and expect to share the profits only in proportion to the amount of my investment: I am even ignorant of the terms of the treaty made with the capitalists. What I desired, was to bring to a successful close an invention in which I believed from the moment it was explained to me.

As to my own invention, I am confident of its success. As an invention, it will be a very beautiful thing: and it will have, I think, very great results. To sum up the matter, I shall have accomplished three things: —

A literary monument, such as will please God.

A serviceable helping hand given to a kind of regeneration in the employment of steam.

Finally, the invention of a machine which will be, one of these days, the point of departure for many other useful inventions; for it is a new motive power that I am introducing into the industrial world.

My life will not have been without importance. Be patient therefore, I beg of you, until the end of the year: and, above all, do not disquiet yourself about my situation, which, embarrassed now, will be easier in the future.

Letters like these, as well as the conversations in which M. Ballanche tried to tranquillize Mme. Récamier, were far from inspiring her with confidence.

In 1843, M. de Chateaubriand was induced to make a new trial of the waters; he was sent to Bourbonne-les-Bains.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

June 30, 1843.

I have made my journey in my usual state of mind, filled with regrets at being obliged to leave you. I saw the same things everywhere—fields and harvests, that have lost all interest for me. These are old stories, and you are the only thing I love to see. When we grow old, the horizon is not before us but behind us. Shall I be cured here? I have so written to the Rue du Bac;[1] but there is no cure for old age. It is always the same strain with me. We are all a band of wounded here, but I shall make all the haste I can to return to you. I am going to walk out with the lark: she shall sing to you of me, then she will be silent for ever in the furrow into which she will have dropped. This is all that my poor fingers will let me write to-day. Kind regards to our friends. Will you not write me a few lines: it would give me great pleasure. My writing has shrunk, like myself. I shall take up very little room. Cherish my memory: it will not trouble you. If you should happen to write to me, direct to Bourbonne-les-Bains. What are you doing? where are you passing your time? I bathe to-day for the first time.

[Dictated.] BOURBONNE, July 1, 1843.

So you were thinking of writing to me with your own hand, when on my side I was scribbling the little letter that you have

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[1] Mme. de Chateaubriand.

received. Is it not wonderful, the sympathy between us? I think exactly as you think. Venice is my only thought. We must finish our days there, in a city for which we have an affiliation. We shall meet with no resistance in the Rue du Bac with regard to this project. Therefore, lay in a stock of health and courage.

I shall only try the baths until next Sunday. To tell the truth, I have not the slightest idea they will do me any good. I have only one hope graven on my heart, and that is, to see you again. To-day I have done nothing. I wanted to go and see the cemetery for an occupation, but I could not get there; and after walking a thirtieth part of the way, I came back, dying with fatigue. So you see what a state I am in; but it is no matter; my heart remains, and it is the only good thing I possess. You know whether it is yours or not.

Marshal Oudinot is leaving my house with his wife; he has been replaced by Marshal Bourmont with his son. These two men have no dislike to me, because I have nothing to ask from them. There is a Mme. de Menou here. I thought that Mme. de Menou died lately in Italy, where I hope you and I are going to die.

July 2.

I received this morning a letter from Mme. de Chateaubriand; you have spoken too soon to her about Venice, and as if you were inclined to consent to it. I want to leave France for good, and that cannot be done in twenty-four hours. Years have made me deliberate. I cannot be ready, nor persuade my wife, though very willing, before next year. Another winter must pass over us first. We will cross the Alps together, on the return of the nightingale.

I shall begin to bathe positively to-morrow: the most useless thing in the world.

[Dictated.] BOURBONNE, July 6.

I must again request you to go and see Mme. de Chateaubriand, who complains of not seeing you. How can it be helped? Since you have associated yourself in my life, it is necessary to share it fully. What are you doing? Where are you going?

My ill-health has greatly disturbed our plans for the year, but it will also be the last time. There was still something for me to try: now I shall have a clear conscience, as I knew beforehand how useless the journey would be. Do not speak of this in the Rue du Bac; they would everlastingly urge me

to go to the Pyrennees, where it is exactly the same as it is here. It is enough for me to bear what I do here, without having to endure the ills that the poor Viscountess de Noailles was entrapped into at Carlsbad.

I am doing nothing at all here: I have not had the least inspiration; I am simply teased and enchanted with the fables of La Fontaine, that haunt me incessantly: —

"*Passe encore de bâtir, mais planter à cet age!*"[1]

The key of the cemetery has been lent to me, and I am going this morning to take advantage of it. I am treated here as I am everywhere, — a great deal too well What has gratified me the most, was a visit from nine students from the college of La Marche, four leagues from here, to whom, in order that they should not be punished, I was obliged to give a note to attest that they had certainly been to see me. When you come to seek me, I will also give you a few lines to excuse you to your friends. My bath this morning has been quite beneficial; it is the fourth; but they still seem to weaken my poor legs. We will go and get a gondola at Venice.

I am charmed with what you tell me of M. de Noailles, because I am really attached to him. Do not forget to remember me to all our friends. Ballanche the philosopher is self-sustained: but I hold to M. Lenormant and M. Ampère by my weakness.

[In his own hand.]

I wish to finish by two words in my own writing, to prove to you that I am still living for you. It is very sad to be reduced to this.

[Dictated.] BOURBONNE, July 12, 1843.

I had counted upon writing to you with my own hand, but I reckoned without my host. The douches, which fatigue me horribly, have taken away the remainder of my strength. Your judgments are very severe on the Rue du Bac; but think of the difference in habits. If you look upon what interests them as nonsense, they also, on their side, may regard in the same light what interests you. It is only necessary to change the point of view.

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[1] From the Fable of "The Old Man and the Three Young Ones:" —

"A man was planting at fourscore;
Three striplings who their satchels wore,
'In building,' cried, 'the sense were more;
But then, to plant young trees at that age,
The man is surely in his dotage.'"

— *Wright's Translation of La Fontaine's Fables.* — ED.

Nothing, I assure you, interests me here. Some collegians came to see me yesterday, who gave me a little music out in the street. I do not know whether any body else is here; one thing is certain, I have shut myself up, and do not even see a cat. Your hour shall never be employed but for you. Alas! I hope your life is not disarranged by my absence. I am approaching that period when souvenirs of me will be all you will have left.

I am at my third douche. They overpower me: but I do not wish to leave any thing untried, with which to be reproached; they will not be able to say any longer, that I do nothing because I believe in nothing.

How good you were to write to me; and I am so touched by the effort, evident in your handwriting, that I wish to thank you by a word in mine. . . .

[In his own hand.]

Cherish faithfully your attachment to me: it is all my life. You see how my poor hand trembles, but my heart is firm.

[Dictated.] BOURBONNE, July 14.

Many, many thanks for your few lines of the 12th, still in your own hand. This religious attention to souvenirs delights me. Ah, that poor valley![1] there is not noble feeling enough in the world ever to restore it to me. Besides, what should I do there without you? Neither at Châtenay nor Aunay could I find what I have lost. To-day a new world is beginning, which I despise, and with which I have nothing in common.

Every evening I amuse myself watching the smoke curling from the chimney of a cabin; and two or three swallows, who, like me, are only birds of passage.

The collegians have returned in a body, with their professors at their head. They have played airs for me on wind instruments, under my windows. They really perform delightfully. In my day, we students used to sing together, —

> "*Quand le roi partit de France,*
> *En malheur il partit;*
> *Il en partit le dimanche,*
> *Et le lundi il fut pris.*"[2]

The verse did not amount to much, but the whole heart of France was in it. Boys troubling themselves over the battle of

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[1] Vallée-aux-Loups, where M. de Chateaubriand built the retreat which he was forced to sell.

[2] When the king left France, he left in grief. He left on Sunday, and was taken on Monday.

Pavia, which took place two hundred and twenty years before their time, is worth more than a chapel raised to the memory of the Duke d'Orleans; especially when the chapel, commenced in memory of the death of the Duke de Berry, has been demolished with so much courage. How full of importance we Frenchmen of to-day are! How worthy of liberty, and by what noble transports are we animated against the slavery wherein we have lived for fifty years!

Oh dear! why do I talk in this strain? Why jumble things together of which you have no recollection? It is because it comes natural to me to associate you with every thing good and beautiful.

Good-night for to-day: I am going to see a chaffinch of my acquaintance, that sometimes sings in the vines that hang over my roof.

Toward the end of the month, I hope to be with you.

You tell me gayly, that you only see women who please you but little; as for me, I have only *curés*, who send me strawberries: now if I could only carry them to you!

I am living here on my past: there is talk only of the "Genius of Christianity," which I scribbled off more than forty years ago.

[In his own hand]

My few words now are comprised in my signature. My hand trembles badly from the shock of the douche. I shall see you soon.

July 19, 1843.

My hand went better yesterday than to-day, because I had a more tranquil night; but, nevertheless, I am going to write to you. I thank you for your letter of the 16th: but I fear that you may do yourself an injury, tiring yourself out to write to me. I was very sure that it was you who had urged M. Ampère on, and I thank you for it. I shall start by the last of next week. There will be still a few days of autumn left, and we will see what can be done. Can you read me? I doubt it. But love me a little, for the pleasure I have in talking to you, even at a distance. Your letter was somewhat rude; but the interest you take in my poor life went to my heart.

Mme. de Chateaubriand, on her part, has said a thousand pleasant things of you. See how you hold me enchained on every side. . . .

Upon his return from the baths of Bourbonne, in the

month of October, 1843, M. de Chateaubriand received from the Count de Chambord the following letter: —

MAGDEBOURG, Sept. 30, 1843.

You are aware, Sir Viscount, that I have long desired to have you spend some time with me. Obstacles, that have been a source of keen annoyance to me, have until now stood in the way of my wishes; but a favorable opportunity having offered itself, I hasten to profit by it to make an appeal to your devotion.

After mature reflection, I have decided to go to England. No doubt there are objections to this voyage, especially at the present time; but it seems to me that I ought to try above all to be near France, and to enter into relations with men who can aid me by their good advice and their influence.

I shall be in London by the first fortnight in November, and I earnestly hope that it will be possible for you to join me there: your presence will be very useful to me, and will explain, better than any thing else, the object of my voyage. I shall be both proud and happy to have a man near me whose name is one of the glories of France, and who so nobly represented her in the country I am about to visit.

Come then, Sir Viscount, and rest assured of my lively gratitude, and the pleasure I shall have in expressing to you, by word of mouth, that great esteem and sincere attachment which I take pleasure in reiterating here. HENRI.

Pray present my affectionate compliments to Madame the Viscountess de Chateaubriand.

Notwithstanding M. de Chateaubriand's infirmities, the weight of which he felt so cruelly, he responded with alacrity to the call of his young prince.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

[Dictated.] BOULOGNE, Nov. 21, 1843.

I wished to write to you with my own hand; but I am so tired that I am forced to dictate to M. Danielo.[1] I leave for England to-morrow morning, at seven o'clock. I received three days ago your excellent letter: all has gone on well so far. A deputation of the city has waited upon me.

Adieu. Cherish carefully your love for me, so that I may find it the same on my return. How many things I shall have

[1] Chateaubriand's secretary, who wrote an interesting sketch of Mme. de Chateaubriand, affixed to her husband's memoirs. — ED.

to say to you! I have seen the "Gazette." Thank M. Gen oude for me, if you see him.

Kind remembrances to my old and young friends.

CHATEAUBRIAND.

BOULOGNE, Nov. 22, 1843.

I am still detained here by the wind, but I should not like to sacrifice you in order to obtain what the sky denies me. The authorities have overwhelmed me with attentions. I could carry them along with me. Your see by my chirography how I suffer in writing to you. Love me a little, in spite of the winds and storms. I will write to you from London. The weather is frightful: do not tell Mme. de Chateaubriand of this.

My regards to friends.

MME. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

Monday, 1843.

Here, madame, is the address of M. de Chateaubriand: 35, Belgrave Square. I have just received a letter from the traveller, the saddest in the world: I do not know to what to attribute this change in his ideas since yesterday. If he writes to you, will you be kind enough to let me know whether he speaks to you about his health.

I have no need to reiterate, madame, my assurances of kind regard.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

LONDON, Nov. 24, 1843:
[Dictated.] Albemarle Street, York's Hotel.

I am now much more at ease. I have a letter from the young prince, who unfortunately does not return before Monday. He speaks of himself as disposed to take my advice. Alas! the poor exile can expect from me only useless devotion. London, moreover, seems to me deathly sad. It is always a permanent fog; but when I fed myself on chimeras, I was fitted for that. With all my detestation of this country, I cannot help admiring its commercial importance: the British flag is on every sea. But it will all end only in an unliquidated bill of exchange.

I am not writing myself this morning, because yesterday I wrote too badly to run the risk again to-day of your not being able to read me. I have but one thought, — fidelity to you: all the rest is gone. If I could persuade the young prince to return promptly into another foreign country, this change of exile would suit me as well as one can be suited by a misfortune.

I cannot express to you how well I am treated here. It delights me, but affects me to tears. To-morrow I am going to see once more those Gardens where I indulged in so many reveries: and yet I did not know you at that time. I am ignorant yet of what the papers say, if by accident they speak of me. On this great highway of the world, the traveller passes on without being noticed: so much the better; notoriety now is unpleasant to me. You see, I trust, Mme de Chateaubriand: she will tell you what I have written to her. Do not tell her that I am not well: it will amount to nothing: it is only the fatigue of the voyage, and the season. Do not forget me: write to me at the address you will find below the date of this letter.

[Dictated.] LONDON, Nov. 26, 1843.

To-day is Sunday; the courier will not leave before to-morrow. I am living now in the rooms that Mme. de Levis was ordered to prepare for me at the residence of the prince, who is to arrive to-morrow. I have been airing my melancholy in Kensington Gardens, where you promenaded as the most beautiful of Frenchwomen. I saw the trees again under which "René" first appeared to me: it is a strange thing this return of my visions amid the sad realities of life. At that time I was young, life was before me, and I could strive after the unknown thing that I sought. Now I cannot take one step forward without touching the end. Oh that I were at rest, my last dream being of you! I am anxious about to-morrow's interview: I will tell you about it on Thursday. Take good care, I beg of you, of Mme. de Chateaubriand. I still hope to set out upon my return the end of this week.

I have this moment received your short letter of the 25th. The prince arrives this evening: I will write a line about it to-morrow. CHATEAUBRIAND.

[Dictated.] LONDON, Nov. 28, 1843.

I should like to give you many particulars of this morning, but I am too agitated by the confusion of my thoughts and feelings. What shall I say of a young prince, twenty-three years old, the last of his race, — the longest-lived the world has ever known? At our first interview, which I hope will be the last of this week or the first of next, I will tell you all that I observed.

Pray say to all our friends that my feelings for them have undergone no change; and until the time the curtain falls on the last act of my life, and I retire from that stage upon which, fifty years ago, I first appeared in this country, it will

be always the same thing. The scenes are almost always nearly the same: those who arrange them alone are changed.

The prince is urgent for me to remain. I shall obey him as long as he thinks that I can be a screen for him.

Good day to you, and to all friends. I am a very bad newsmonger: I am so old that there is nothing more to be expected from me. I should like to give you an account of a meeting to-day, in which the young man appeared admirably. He did not commit a single blunder: but little you care for this, you dwellers in France. I only ask to be remembered by you.

[Dictated.] LONDON, Nov. 29, 1843.

I could not write to you yesterday: the day was so taken up that I could only write a hurried line to Mme. de Chateaubriand. The fact is they want to keep me as a shield; and, every time I speak of leaving, they appeal to my devotion. I think it certain that I shall be able to leave from the 10th to the 20th, and that I shall have the happiness of keeping Christmas with you. The young prince overwhelms me: and, truly, I do not know a more gracious young man. Unfortunately, I can respond but poorly to so much kindness: I am so ill that I have not yet been able to dine with my host of the eighteenth century. I contemplate with veneration and pity this old bygone time, disguised under the figure of spring.

The parades here would make one burst with laughing, if they did not rather make one die of shame.[1] Everybody has either hidden or run away. In spite of the Guards and an enormous power, they did not think it best to wait for the pestilence in the shape of a poor orphan of twenty-three. Why, then, could not this traveller have wiped his feet, marked with the dust of Versailles?

England takes no interest in all these miseries. She salutes the heir of Louis XVI., as I have seen her take off the hat to old Catholic priests, my companions in exile: so much nobleness does liberty give.

I am told that when I shall have left, the "Journal des Débats" has prepared itself for an attack. I am sorry for it: but I should only crush Armand Bertin with the skull of his father.

This is all I have to say to you this morning upon rising. With what Mme. de Chateaubriand will have told you, you know all our history. Yesterday the prince received a crowd of Frenchmen of all ranks. I imagine this will be looked upon

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[1] The Court had left London.

as a great piece of insolence, the other side of the channel. To prevent people from sleeping is not well: we should respect the sleep of innocence.

Alas! these are but empty words; a romance, which does not prevent the world from marching on. It is all right enough: but I could wish that they did not show so much anger against these old memoirs.

They might have saluted the young phantom of bygone times; and kings should not have insulted a traveller, whose only support is a sceptre broken in his hand. They laugh, and do not see that they are no longer useful; and that time will soon oblige them to follow the same road as that great royal race that gave them protection, and a vitality which they have no longer.

Adieu for this morning. You see that I am faithful to you. I do not know what is said of us: one thing is certain, we have committed no blunders; and it is very fortunate, that the travellers coming over are not men of rank, but worthy citizens, who hold marquises in respect, if there are any marquises.

Half-past one.

I have just received the recompense of all my life. The prince has deigned to speak of me, in the midst of a crowd of Frenchmen, with an enthusiasm worthy of his youth. If I had the gift of description, I would give you a detail of it; but I shed tears over it, like a fool.

Protect me by your prayers.

[Dictated.]

I have your letter of the 30th; and I start either Wednesday or Thursday, to rejoin you. Is not that the best reply that I can make? You will have the declaration of my prince in the journals. I go away delighted, and full of hope, if, at my age, one can still have hope. I shall soon again be in your salon, with our good friends. CHATEAUBRIAND.

In the spring of 1844, Mme. Récamier hired a house at Auteuil, where she was in the country; yet, at the same time, so near Paris, that M. de Chateaubriand and her other friends could visit her. She had for a neighbor M. Guizot, with whose family she became intimate, and for whose venerable mother she conceived a great admiration. It is very rare to meet with so distinguished a character as Mme. Guizot. Austere and ardent, her heroic nature had all the tenderness of sensibility; and she retained at

eighty a vivacity of intellect, a warmth of enthusiasm, a charm of goodness, truly marvellous. The severity of the costume, which she had adopted in the flower of youth, at the time her husband perished on the scaffold, enhanced the brilliancy of her beautiful eyes, clear and bright as at twenty.

Mme. Guizot having expressed to Mme. Récamier a very warm admiration for the genius of M. de Chateaubriand, a meeting was arranged between them in Mme. Récamier's garden. This interview between the mother of M. Guizot and M. de Chateaubriand[1] was extremely courteous and interesting, and left upon both of them a feeling of sympathy and attraction.

Subsequently M. de Chateaubriand brought the manuscript of the first part of his memoirs for Mme. Lenormant to read to Mme. Guizot.

After three months sojourn at Auteuil, Mme. Récamier returned to Paris, and Mme. Lenormant left for the Department of the Eure, where her aunt joined her the 1st of September.

MME. RÉCAMIER TO MME. LENORMANT.

August 21, 1844.

I thank you for your letter, my dear child: it has re-assured me. I have paid a visit to Auteuil, to ask assistance for the old lady of my convent of Versailles. Two days afterward, Henriette[2] wrote me, that the needful aid was obtained. All this was done in the most graceful and obliging manner. I shall go at once to thank her; but it seems to me you also deserve my gratitude. It must be considered a great happiness to have met in life so perfect a person as your old and saintly friend.[3] I find her so good and so agreeable, that I love as much as I venerate her. The young ladies were in the studio of Mlle. Godefroid,[4] busy painting flowers for their father's birthday.

I am thinking, dear child, of making you a visit of at least a few days. I shall very soon announce to my friends my departure for Normandy.

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[1] M. Guizot was Minister of Louis Philippe, and consequently he stood in a delicate position toward such an enemy to the Government as M. de Chateaubriand.

[2] Eldest daughter of M. Guizot.

[3] The mother of M. Guizot.

[4] The friend and favorite pupil of Gérard.

Mme. Récamier's love for the country grew stronger with years. Kept in Paris by the presence of M. de Chateaubriand, whom she was not willing to abandon, these short intervals of repose, far from all society, noise, and constraint, were keenly enjoyed, and she drew from them strength to support the fatiguing life she had imposed upon herself. She expressed this sentiment in the following note: —

VERSAILLES, Oct. 15, 1844.

Paul must have written to you, my dear child; but I wish to tell you myself what sweet remembrances I retain of my visit to you. I shall hope for the same pleasure again. I enjoyed your society in that retirement more than I have for a long time. Your children also were charming. I have never longed so much as now to be with you all again."

With the exception of M. Ampère, who was travelling in Egypt, the winter found all of Mme. Récamier's friends, whose lives were identified with hers, assembled around her. The disposition of her days was invariably regular. Had she not been naturally systematic, she would have been forced to become so through M. de Chateaubriand's punctuality. She awoke early: and, having always given a great deal of time to books, the first part of her morning was devoted to listening to a rapid reading of the papers, and then the best of the new publications; for few women were more extensively acquainted with current literature. To conform to the wishes of M. de Montmorency, she had early contracted a habit of daily religious reading, which she never neglected at any period. She drew from it the strength she needed.

Before M. de Chateaubriand's hour, she drove out, either on charitable errands, or to make one of those rare visits, which, in the latter part of her life, were narrowed down to Mme. de Boigne and her niece. At half-past two, M. de Chateaubriand arrived. They took tea together, and passed an hour tête-à-tête. Then other visitors were admitted. Ballanche was generally the first, having usually already seen Mme. Récamier; and after him a crowd of people, who came and went at their pleasure. Many of these were daily visitors: some of them came several

times a day, "gravitating," to quote M. Ballanche, "toward the centre of the Abbaye-aux-Bois."

In the spring of 1845, M. de Chateaubriand paid a last visit to the Count de Chambord, at Venice. To have him leave in such feeble health, made Mme. Récamier very anxious; but he bore the journey better than was expected.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND TO MME. RÉCAMIER.

[Dictated.] VENICE, June, 1845.

I was going to start, but was detained by the embraces and prayers of the young prince. My days belong to him; and when he only asks me to sacrifice twenty-four hours, I have no right to refuse him. It is you, if you really love me, who have the right to complain. I am going to pass to-day in seeing again those islands which I have already seen. Several years ago, when I was here, they still showed, in the middle of the Grand Canal, an inscription, calling attention to the fact that Lord Byron had been there. The writing has already disappeared; and the great insular traveller is no more talked of than a poor sinner of the lagunes.

Adieu. I love you, which you well know. Allow me to tell you so again, for the last time.

[Dictated.] PARIS, Sunday morning.

Upon arriving yesterday, I was so horribly tired with my forty leagues of pavement, that I did not read the morning papers; and have just seen, on awaking, that you have lost your friend Prince Augustus of Prussia. I shall come at our hour, if you still count our hour as any thing, to talk to you about your friend.

I find my poor wife much changed. It is she who can no longer walk. What good will my legs be, if they come back to me, if my friends have not any?

It is a great happiness, however, to be so near you, and to see you again.

Mme. Récamier went, as usual, this year to the country, to get some rest; but, much as she needed it, she received very little mental benefit from the change. The thought of M. de Chateaubriand's loneliness pursued her incessantly, casting a shade over her sweetest enjoyments. She first made a short stay at Maintenon, and afterward paid a visit to her niece, in Normandy. She was accompanied by

M. Ampère, lately arrived from Egypt, and quite seriously ill from the fatigues of the voyage. M. Ballanche was with his housekeeper, "Dragonneau," at St. Vrain. He dated his letters from the "Era of the Dispersion;" and, though receiving every attention from his hosts, M. and Mme. d'Hautefeuille, could not reconcile himself at all to Mme. Récamier's absence. M. de Chateaubriand did not bear it with any more patience, and every day a doleful letter came to hasten her return. On the 7th of September, he dictated a few lines ending thus: —

"I am moreover sorry, and on your account, that this beautiful weather, far from doing me good, does me harm. Enjoy to the full these last days of sunshine, and give my best wishes to the young family. She is coming; and it is on that account that they are so gay. When you return, I shall resume life again. Do not hurry. I pass my time here at Notre Dame: it is well filled up between God and you."

At last a note, sadder than the rest, decided Mme. Récamier to return: —

[Dictated.] PARIS, Sept. 14, 1845.

Your letter, or your note rather, of this morning throws me into consternation. I have much more need of you than you of me. I shall soon leave this world. It is time that I should turn my last moments to advantage. These moments are yours, and I would like to give them to you. I do not say to you, return. What good would it be to see again one who has only a few moments to live? But at least these moments are yours; and, as long as my heart continues to beat, you can count upon them as the relics of a life that belongs to you. I hope that you are too much alarmed, and that I shall hear to-morrow that you have started on your return to me. Adieu, to meet soon; at least, I hope so. Kind regards to your niece and M. Lenormant.

MME. RÉCAMIER TO MME. LENORMANT.

What pleasant recollections I have brought away from St. Eloi! How happy I was amongst you all! With what impatience am I looking forward to the 10th of October! I have read to M. de Chateaubriand the very pleasant article on the pilgrimage to Combourg;[1] Juliette's letter was charming. I

[1] By M. Lenormant.

have seen Mme. Guizot and the young ladies, who are expecting you impatiently.

M. Guizot, whom I found with his mother, was very kind. I profited by the opportunity to make a little request to him for Mlle. Robert; and, in the most eager and gracious way, he gave me a check for two hundred francs. M. de Salvandy came to see me the same day: he was still radiant from the fortnight he had passed at Eu. I am still much pleased with Mlle. Godefroid. M. Ballanche is quite well: poor M. Brifaut still suffers much, but his courage does not fail. What might be regarded as frivolous, becomes admirable in his painful situation. Mme. and Mlle. Deffaudis come every evening, and entertain me with music. Camille's voice is charming. This is a very long letter, for my poor eyes: I write as with white ink, without seeing what I write. Will you be able to read me? Adieu, my Amelia; adieu.

Since 1839, a cataract had been forming on one of Mme. Récamier's eyes; which gave her the more uneasiness, as she feared that this approaching blindness would make her less useful to M. de Chateaubriand, and she would thus lose the means of amusing him. Her dislike of troubling others with her infirmities led her, even when she became perfectly blind, to conceal the fact for a long time from her general acquaintance. Her hearing was remarkably acute, and her eyes had not sensibly lost their brilliancy; and, with an unequalled tact, she recognized instantly, by the first inflection of the voice, people who approached her. Her man-servant took care to arrange the furniture in her salon always in the same order, that she might have no difficulty in moving about; and many people, in hearing her speak of her "poor eyes," only imagined that her sight was not so good as formerly.

The possibility of being obliged to submit to an operation, without alarming her, appeared near enough to cause her some anxiety. A physician was spoken to — Dr. Drouot — who cured cataracts, without an operation, by means of certain frictions. She submitted all the winter of 1845–46 to this treatment, but it resulted in no permanent good. By the use of belladonna, which dilated the pupil, her sight was often restored to her for some hours. She was thus able to see and admire, in the month of

May, 1846, Ary Scheffer's beautiful picture of St. Augustine, which he kindly sent to the Abbaye-aux-Bois for her and M. de Chateaubriand's inspection. It was the last and one of the most profound emotions that I saw them feel before a *chef d'œuvre* of art.

With the almost entire blindness of Mme. Récamier, and the feeble state of health of her two friends, there was no longer any thought of leaving Paris. Two suites of rooms were hired at Beau-Séjour, one for Mme. Récamier, the other for Mme. Lenormant and her young family. In the summer of 1846, M. de Chateaubriand came regularly at his hour; the distance being so inconsiderable from the Rue du Bac, that he himself saw the advantage of the drive.

M. Ballanche arrived every day at three o'clock, and was present at the family dinner. I cannot say that he took part in it, as his repast consisted in a cup of milk and a biscuit. He returned in the evening to Paris, with M. Paul David.

This was the last summer Mme. Récamier passed with all her friends about her. It had been decided that an operation should be performed upon her eyes in the autumn, before she left Passy; but, in the middle of August, M. de Chateaubriand had the misfortune to break his collar-bone, from his foot slipping as he got out of his carriage. The fracture was not serious; but, as it would confine him to the house for some time, Mme. Récamier determined to postpone the operation, and the whole colony returned immediately to Paris.

This accident marked a new stage in the physical decline of M. de Chateaubriand: from this time he walked no more. When he came to the Abbaye, his own and Mme. Récamier's man-servant carried him from his carriage to the threshold of the salon; he was then placed in an arm-chair, and wheeled to the corner of the fireplace. When this was done, Mme. Récamier was the only one present, and visitors, who were admitted after the tea, found M. de Chateaubriand all settled; but he was obliged to leave in the presence of strangers: and this, as M. de Chateaubriand was extremely sensitive with regard to his

infirmities, was always a trying moment. Out of respect for him, no one appeared to notice when he was carried from the room.

Frequently, instead of receiving the friends who assisted in amusing M. de Chateaubriand in her own salon, Mme. Récamier would make an appointment to meet them at the Rue du Bac. Here, as at the Abbaye, she was the presiding spirit; and, when Mme. de Chateaubriand made her appearance, she seemed like a visitor.

The winter of 1846–47 was extremely sad; and, to inaugurate this new and fatal year, in the month of February Mme. de Chateaubriand was taken away from her husband, family, and her poor, after an illness of a few days.

A few weeks afterward, Mme. Récamier submitted, for the first time, to an operation which, though performed by an able surgeon, failed to restore her sight. Circumstances conspired against its being successful. In her anxiety to resume the habits that she knew were so dear to her friends, Mme. Récamier too soon abandoned necessary precautions. Great composure of mind was also recommended, and fate brought her only inquietudes. Ballanche, already very feeble and broken down, was attacked, a month after the operation, with pleurisy. He lodged opposite the Abbaye; but he would not consent that Mme. Récamier should cross the street, and brave the brilliancy of the light so injurious to her eyes. But she, informed of his dangerous condition, and forgetting all the precautions recommended to her, installed herself by his couch, and did not leave it until all was over; but she lost in tears every chance of recovering her sight.

The *curé* of the Abbaye-aux-Bois administered the last consolations of religion to the dying man, and was much struck by the degree of faith with which M. Ballanche acquiesced in the mysteries of Christianity. His mind was so clear and his heart so firm, his serenity and confidence in the divine mercy so absolute, that never has the fearful spectacle of death seemed attended with more grandeur.[1]

[1] Ballanche died on the 12th of June, 1847, after an illness of eight days. — ED.

The mortal remains of this incomparable friend received, in the family tomb of Mme. Récamier, the last hospitality. He reposes there by the side of her whom in life he had loved so well.

Mme. Récamier's grief was severe; and, instead of softening with time, it became every day more profound. How could it be otherwise? How could this soul, echo of her soul, this heart that she filled entirely, this admirable intelligence which yielded to her influence so gladly, even to the point of having no will but hers, pass away without leaving behind an immense void?

I doubt whether Mme. Récamier could have supported the isolation of heart consequent upon the death of Ballanche, had she not had her mission of devotion to perform by the side of M. de Chateaubriand. This had become more and more difficult, and absorbed all her time and faculties.

A few months after the death of his wife, in expressing his ardent gratitude to her who had constituted herself the good angel of his last days, M. de Chateaubriand begged her to honor his name by consenting to bear it. His earnestness deeply touched Mme. Récamier; but she was firm in her refusal.

"Why should we marry?" she said; "at our age, there can be no impropriety in my taking care of you. If solitude is painful to you, I am ready to live in the same house with you. The world, I am certain, will do justice to the purity of our friendship, and sanction any thing that will render the task — of making you, in your old age, happy and comfortable — more easy for me. If we were younger, I should not hesitate, but accept with joy the right to consecrate my life to you. Years and blindness have given me this right. Let us change nothing in so perfect an affection."

Mme. Récamier was right; but, while acknowledging this, M. de Chateaubriand could not console himself, he said, for her refusal to bear his name.

Toward the end of July, Mme. Récamier, whose nerves were shaken by her recent trials, consented to leave with her niece for the country. M. de Chateaubriand left Paris at the same time; but he only remained a week at Dieppe,

and returned to Paris to find himself alone. Mme. Lenormant having written to him of the painful surprise felt by Mme. Récamier at this unexpected return, he thus replied to her: —

PARIS, July 22, 1847.

The promptitude of my return, madame, is explained by my ennui: it is not necessary to assign it to any other cause. As I left, so I return. After having seen a few vessels sailing on the sea, I grew wearied; and I have come back for no other reason than my inability to long take an interest in any thing. Please impress it upon your aunt not to attach any importance to what I do.

I am not at all pleased with your "respectful admiration." One little word of tenderness like that I send you is much more to me, and this tenderness is always yours, and also M. Lenormant's. But I have come back; you will return also, and I shall only have to felicitate myself upon my happiness. To sign is extremely difficult. CHATEAUBRIAND.

Mme. Récamier was inclined to leave immediately, and the entreaties of her niece could scarcely retain her. To be with persons who sympathized wholly with her for the loss of M. Ballanche, was, however, a solace to her. M. Ampère was preparing his memorial of the philosopher; and, to give an idea of his peculiar genius, Mme. Récamier and he selected from his works those beauties which would bear extracting. But she did not long enjoy the quiet, and good country air. M. de Chateaubriand's correspondence manifested so discouraged a state of mind, that she could not leave him longer alone. He wrote: —

July 28.

It is a great pity to be always separated. Alas! when shall we meet again? I still think that we ought never to leave each other, for we are not sure of meeting again. My health is good; but it will be better when you come back. Return quickly, then. I must never leave you again. Adieu, adieu. Always adieus: life is made up of them.

Mme. Récamier, ill and blind, resumed, for M. de Chateaubriand's sake, not only her relations with society, but her morning receptions. She had the courage to submit to a second operation, this time on the other eye, so great was her desire to recover her sight in order to be more useful

to her friend. This, like the first, was almost wholly unsuccessful.

Then came public troubles, misfortunes, to add to private griefs. The Revolution of February swept away the throne that the Revolution of July had established. Civil war caused the streets of the capital to stream with blood; and the dying agony of the author of the "Genius of Christianity" had for its sinister accompaniment the cannon of the June insurrection.

M. de Chateaubriand, it may be imagined, did not regret the downfall of Louis Philippe; but if, at the approach of death, one looks no longer upon events with the prejudices of party spirit, this great and noble heart was still faithful to one sentiment, — the love of country. He never ceased to utter prayers for her freedom. During those days of June, he eagerly questioned every one who could give him any intelligence. The recital of the heroic death of the Archbishop of Paris filled him with the liveliest emotion; some courageous acts of the intrepid soldiers of the body-guard moved him to tears: but he had already for some time been subject to long fits of silence, and, except in tête-à-têtes with Mme. Récamier, he spoke but seldom, and then briefly. His last illness confined him to his bed only a few days. He asked for, and received the consolations of, religion, not only with full and perfect consciousness, but with a profound feeling of faith and humility.

M. de Chateaubriand, in these last days, was easily affected to tears, and he reproached himself for it as for a weakness. I think that he was afraid of being too much overcome in addressing a few words to his inconsolable friend, on the eve of his death; but after he had received the holy viaticum he never spoke again.

His fever was high and colored his cheeks, giving to his eyes extraordinary brilliancy. I was several times alone with Mme. Récamier by the bedside of this great man in his struggle with death. Each time that she, choked by her grief, left the room, he followed her with his eyes, without recalling her, but with an agony indicative of the fear he felt lest he should not see her again. As she could not see these looks, she was filled with despair at his

silence. Blindness had begun the work of separation before death.

M. de Chateaubriand gave up his soul to God the 4th of July, 1848. It has been said that Béranger was present. This is a mistake. Four persons only witnessed his death, — Count Louis de Chateaubriand, the Abbé Deguerry, a sister of charity, and Mme. Récamier.

In losing M. de Chateaubriand, Mme. Récamier felt that the mainspring of her life was gone. She shed no tears; her grief was silent and submissive; a strange, alarming pallor spread over her face, which never left it; while her whole appearance, indicative of the calmness of despair, showed that she would not long survive him. She did not repulse any consolation, or any efforts of her family and friends to divert her thoughts. She forced herself to be interested in conversation and reading: and, with that grace which to the last lent a charm to her slightest words and most trivial actions, she thanked her friends for these attentions; but the sad smile that then played on her lips was heart-rending.

She had afflicted the heart of M. de Chateaubriand by refusing to bear his name, yet she wished to wear mourning for him. While witnessing the decline of this noble genius, she had struggled with a passionate tenderness against the terrible effect of years upon him: she had wished to conceal it from the world and to hide it from him, neither would she confess it to herself. But this long struggle had exhausted her strength; and, when death had set the seal of immortality on the great soul with whom her own was identified, it seemed that the motive of her life was gone.

Mme. Récamier often spoke of M. Ballanche, and always in connection with M. de Chateaubriand. She talked of them as though they were only momentarily absent. At the hour they were in the habit of entering her salon, if the door opened, I have seen her tremble. Upon asking the reason, she told me, that at certain moments her idea of them was so vivid that it became a sort of apparition. The cloud in which all objects were enveloped for her, favored these effects of the imagination.

The publication of the "Memoires d'Outre Tombe," in the columns of "La Presse," greatly disturbed Mme. Récamier. She knew how highly M. de Chateaubriand had disapproved of this mode of publishing the work, and how he had wished to prevent it. She lived long enough to see the injury it was to the success of the memoirs. The publicity of a daily journal made some of the opinions seem of greater severity, and consequently created more ill-feeling and enmity.

Eight months passed thus. On Holy Saturday of 1849, Mme. Lenormant found her aunt somewhat disturbed at the fresh invasion of the cholera. In her state of mind she was assuredly far from fearing death; but under this form it frightened her. As the Abbaye-aux-Bois was in an infected district, Mme. Récamier left it, and took up her abode with her niece on Easter day.

It has already been said, and cannot be too often repeated, that no one was more delightful in her domestic relations than Mme. Récamier. The regularity of her habits singularly facilitated the common life of a family. Obliged to make use of the eyes of others to gratify her love of literature, she contrived to suit her reading to her reader; for she could better endure being tired herself than to be the cause of weariness to others. Her own sorrows did not lessen her interest in the pursuits of her friends: she was only indifferent to herself.

At this period, there was nothing in her state of health to make her friends anxious. She was, without doubt, extremely feeble; she slept little, and had no appetite; but this was her normal condition, and painful as it was, it did not excite any new apprehensions. Only three days before her death, she received M. de Saint Priest, who read to her the eulogium on M. Ballanche which he was to pronounce before the Academy, in which she took great interest. She still drove out every day; and, on the morning of the 9th, went to the Abbaye-aux-Bois on an errand. Upon her return, she received several visits before dinner; and in the evening, besides the usual family circle and M. Ampère, she admitted Mme. Salvage. The next day she was so little unwell, that she sent her maid out on

some errands that would detain her several hours. During her absence, her great-niece Juliette finished reading to her the "Memoires of Mme. de Motteville." At four o'clock, while dressing for dinner, she was seized with such strange and sudden symptoms, that she instantly called Mme. Lenormant. The latter hastened to her, and found her voice almost inaudible. Dr. Maisonneuve was summoned, who prescribed a warm bed and some slight remedies, and went away, saying that the attack would not be serious, were it not for the prevalence of the epidemic. He was less assured, however, than he pretended to be, for he returned at seven o'clock, and spent the whole night by the bedside of his patient.

As soon as she was placed in bed, Mme. Récamier fainted away. Upon coming to herself, she asked to be left alone with her niece, and, with a feeble voice but a firm heart, explained to her her last wishes. The change in her appearance was so great, that Mme. Lenormant was seized with terror. Dr. Récamier unfortunately was absent. M. Cruveillier was called in, who pronounced the disease cholera. He did not conceal from Mme. Lenormant that there was no hope, and added, that the terrible struggle would be short.

For twelve hours, this angelic woman was a prey to the most agonizing suffering: still her courage, sweetness, and celestial tenderness never abandoned her for one instant. She asked for her confessor, and received extreme unction. She also wished to receive the holy viaticum, but her state did not permit the gratification of this pious desire. "We shall meet again, we shall meet again," she did not cease to repeat to her niece; and, when she lost the power of utterance, she raised her poor lips for a last kiss.

M. Ampère, Paul David, and M. Lenormant passed the night in an adjoining room. At midnight, when the convulsions ceased for a moment, she asked for them, and desired that they should come in. Hearing their steps, she bade them farewell as for the night — tenderly, without solemnity.

Such was the rapidity of the disease, that the news of it had not yet got abroad. The Abbé de Cazalès, ignorant

of the scourge that had visited the dwelling of his friends, came to the Library. The last moment had come: he made his way to the chamber, a scene of grief, and, amid the sobs of the family and the kneeling servants, began to recite the prayers for the dying. Mme. Récamier expired the 11th of May, 1849.

Cholera ordinarily leaves frightful traces upon its victims, but by an exception which I cannot help regarding as a last favor of Heaven, Mme. Récamier's features assumed in death a surprising beauty. Her expression was angelic and grave; she looked like a beautiful statue; there was no contraction, nor were there any wrinkles: and never has the majesty of the last sleep been attended with so much grace and sweetness. A sketch by Achilles Devéria has preserved the memory of this remarkable circumstance.

Ten years have elapsed since the death of Mme. Récamier. At any moment, the few persons who still keep the souvenirs of her life may pass away. It is time, then, that a delicate but sacred task should be executed, — a task that will not be unworthily fulfilled, if love and duty can take the place of power and talent.

THE END.

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